

Squaring the circle of the global drug scourge

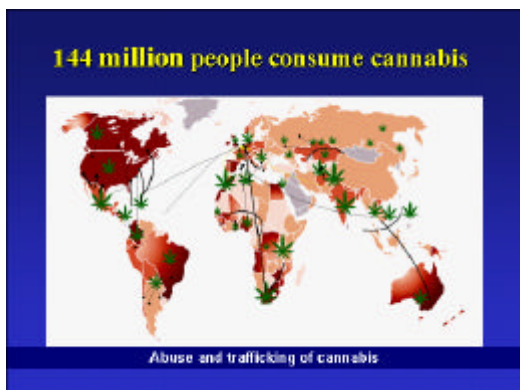
Speech by Dr. Sandro Calvani
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At the 11 IFNGO ASEAN NGOs Workshop
“**New Dimensions In Drug Abuse Prevention**”
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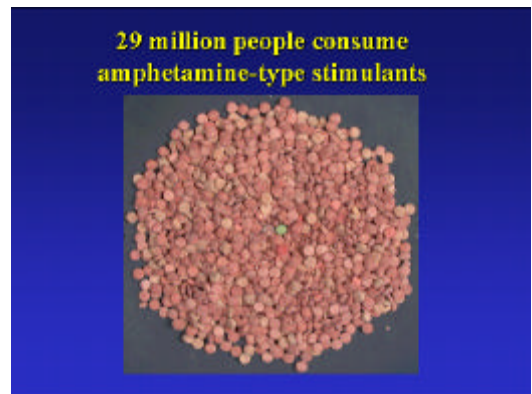
1. The time has come to change the way we think about drugs



The illicit drug trade touches millions of lives in both developed and developing countries. Its most negative impact is concentrated amongst the vulnerable and marginalized of our societies. The UN estimates that some 180 million people worldwide – 4.2% of people aged 15 years and above – were consuming drugs in the late 1990s; this figure includes



144 million consuming cannabis,



29 million people consuming amphetamine-type stimulants,



14 million people taking cocaine and 13 million abusing opiates,



and 9 million of



whom are addicted to heroin. However, we

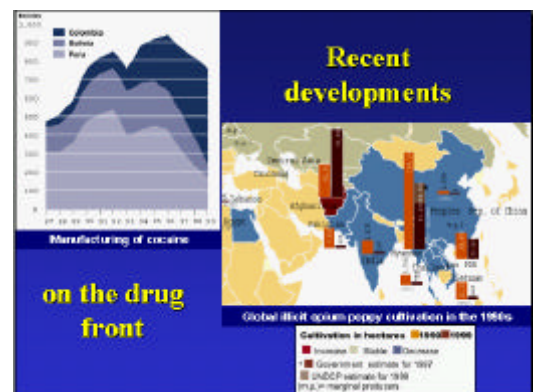


must end the psychology of despair that has gripped the minds of a generation and would have us believe that nothing can be done to roll back, let alone stop, the consumption of drugs. Instead, we should focus on a pragmatic, integrated, long-term

approach to addressing both supply and demand side issues. Through clear and concerted action we can indeed realize the objectives of substantially reducing the non-medical demand for drugs, and the eradication of coca and opium poppy production.



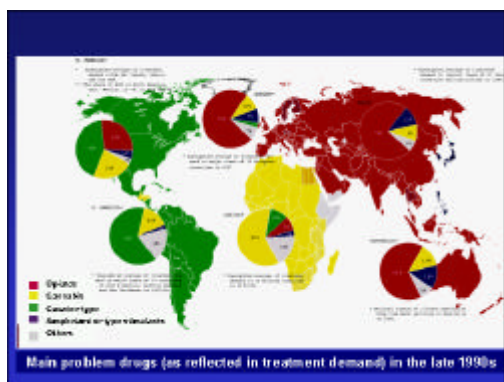
There are those who will scoff at such a view. Who argue that the tidal flow of addictive drugs is unstoppable and irreversible. Who believe that states and institutions are weak and will capitulate in the face of the organized criminal networks that are responsible for the production, trafficking, and distribution of cocaine and heroin. Who can offer no way forward other than policy capitulation. Those unable to break out of this negative mindset should begin by considering a raft of recent and decidedly positive developments on the drugs front:



- Pakistan is virtually poppy free in the year 2000, production having all but been eradicated following the

implementation of a 15-year programme.

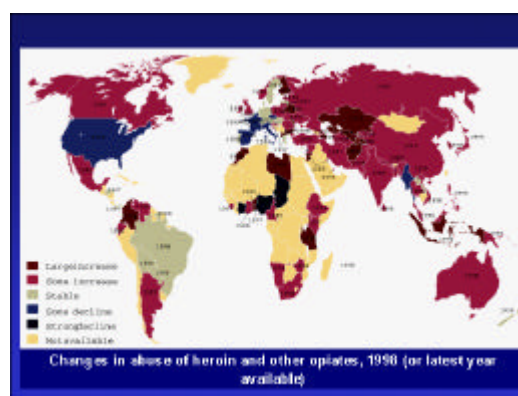
- Bolivia has reduced the area under illicit coca cultivation by 78% in just three years, in line with its “Dignity Plan”, launched in 1997.
- Coca production in Peru, which rose steeply in the 1980s, has declined equally precipitously since 1992, with a 50% reduction in the supply and cocaine to the world market.
- Opium in Laos, the world’s third largest producer, was cut by 30% over the last eighteen months.
- In Vietnam, cultivation of opium poppy was reduced by 90% in the 1990s.
- Opium poppy production in Thailand has fallen following the strong lead given by the country’s king, with the support of local institutions and the international community through the UNDCP
- The global area under opium poppy cultivation is at its lowest level since 1988, some 17% smaller in 1999 than 1990; similarly, the area under coca cultivation is at its lowest level since 1987, about 14% less in 1999 than in 1990.



- The profile of illegal drugs in the economies of the main producing countries has posted a decisive trend of decline. Even in countries where

production levels have remained stubbornly high, the share of GDP has been falling, with drugs contributing some 2.5% of Columbia’s economic output, down from a mid-1980s high around 7%.

- During the 1990s consumption trends of the main problem drugs in the developed countries have been stable or declining; the abuse of cocaine fell in North America as compared to a decade earlier and heroin abuse was stable in Western Europe.



The good news belies the perception that the drug problem can only get worse. It is no aberration. We need to remind ourselves that the history of addictive drugs is not one of a steady and inexorable deterioration. Rather, the past shows fluctuating trends. Things can get worse, but they can also improve. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient for us to merely do what we have done before. We need to maintain the momentum because in reality, many challenges still face us. UNDCP is mindful of this and are forever reevaluating our own mission and activities to see how we can enhance and expand our contribution.

2. UNDCP leads and facilitates the global fight against drugs



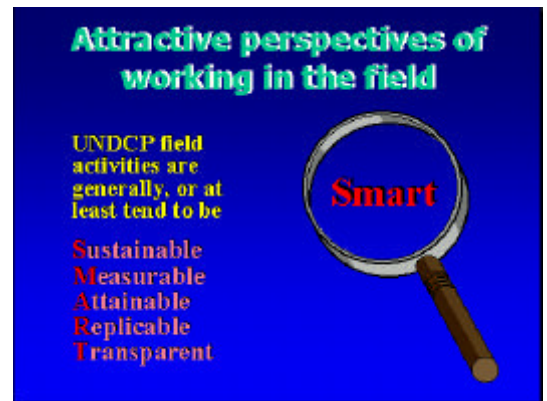
The United Nations International Drug Control Programme's Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok aims to enhance joint efforts among countries of the region toward the suppression of illicit drugs and transnational crime. This will be achieved by:



- strengthening the capacity of government agencies and civil society institutions by implementing regional and national projects that build upon best drug awareness practices as well as effective monitoring of drug control and transnational crime developments.
- facilitating cooperation among countries of the region to control production, trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs and drug related crime and corruption by strengthening international, regional and bilateral collaboration and assist in the development and implementation of joint policies, strategies, and

programmes in particular the Subregional Action Plan.

- serving as an advocate for a drug resistant East Asia and the Pacific region by promoting public and political awareness through media and the civil society at large.



UNDCP has a concentration of some of the best minds working in the area of combating illegal drugs and organized crime. These professionals are in turn increasingly well networked to the best technical know-how in different branches of national governments, among national and international NGO communities and in universities and research institutions across the globe. This insider informed and global view makes us uniquely well placed to develop innovative, dynamic yet realistic initiatives for future action. As we are faced with current and emerging problems, UNDCP is ready to step up to the challenge.

The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) is mandated to coordinate and lead UN drug control activities. In East Asia and the Pacific, it targets illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse problems, as well as related legislative and institutional reforms. It also assists Governments to comply with the International Drug Control Conventions. UNDCP activities can be divided into three main areas:



- Demand Reduction
- Supply Reduction
- Legislation and Law Enforcement

UNDCP operates according to the principle of a Balanced Approach – meaning that Demand Reduction, Supply Reduction and Law Enforcement activities are all required simultaneously in order to achieve sustainable progress – and of an Integrated Approach – meaning that Demand Reduction, Supply Reduction and Law Enforcement need to be seen as uniquely interrelated and requiring genuine between government agencies, civil society organizations and local communities.

Many examples exist that demonstrate how the Regional Centre is challenging the drug trade. In these last minutes of my presentation, I will take the time to highlight a few:

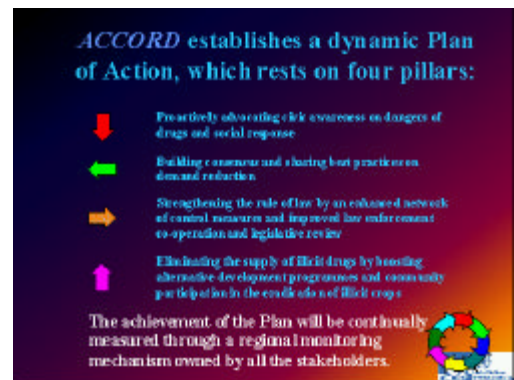


3. In the greater Mekong subregion

The Subregional Action Plan for Drug Control is a strategic outline to address the problems of illicit drug production, trafficking, and abuse. It was officially endorsed by the first Ministerial Meeting of the six MOU Governments and UNDCP in Beijing in 1995. Within the framework of the Action Plan, UNDCP acts as a catalyst and coordinator of drug control activities, concentrating on broad-based and long term programmes, assisting subregional and national project formulation and execution institutions.

Currently, there are twelve projects under implementation and it is envisaged that new projects corresponding with the overall objectives and the needs of the countries will be identified and included in the Plan.

4. In the ASEAN countries and China

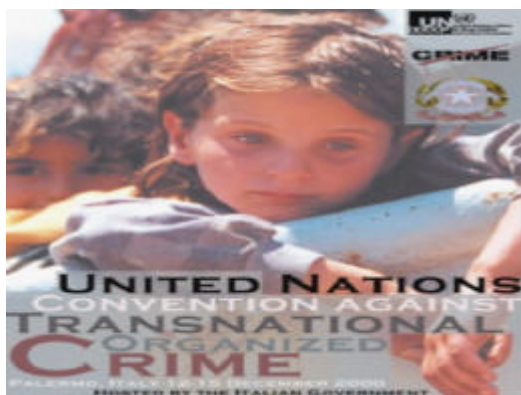


Forced to face the profound challenges emerging from transnational organized crime, the international community demanded action. The ACCORD (ASEAN and China Cooperative Operation in Response to Dangerous Drugs) Plan of Action was unanimously endorsed by 378 participants from 36 countries and 16 organizations at the International Congress “In Pursuit of a Drug ASEAN 2015: Sharing the vision, leading the change” on October 13, 2000

in Bangkok, Thailand. The dynamic Plan of Action rests on four pillars:

- Proactively advocating civic awareness on dangers of drugs and social response
- 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 legislation review
- Eliminating the supply of illicit drugs by boosting alternative development programmes and community participation in the eradication of illicit crops.

5. UNDCP facilitates the execution of the agreements of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of December 2000



In response to the increasing international alarm the growing power of criminal groups and their involvement in new and alarmingly exploitative crimes, the first international treaty to address these concerns was opened for signature in December 2000 .The Convention extends well beyond the sphere of cooperation on drug trafficking. It seeks to strengthen the power of governments in combating serious crimes. The new treaty will provide the basis for stronger common action against money-laundering, greater

ease of extradition, and measures on the protection of witnesses and enhanced judicial cooperation. It will also establish a funding mechanism to help countries implement the Convention. The Palermo Convention is intended to be a working tool. The strategy to be followed at both the national and international levels should be simply to put it to work. This is a process in six steps:



1. Ratification as quickly as possible;
2. Making the required adjustments in national crime legislation;
3. Allocation of the needed resources at the national level;
4. Intensive technical cooperation for capacity - building in the developing countries;
5. Pro-active approaches to mutual legal assistance.
6. Making sure that the Conference of the Parties - the Convention's monitoring body becomes an effective mechanism.

6. We can make a difference



New challenges and possible improvements in the drug eradication in this region are well known to most of you. Drug production, trafficking and abuse and its connection with the HIV/AIDS socio-economic scourge, are possibly the greatest challenge faced by the region in its process of peaceful and sustainable development.

The overall human security of the region is at stake. It is important to keep in mind that the leaders of the Region and the drug control managers are not alone. The international community and the United Nations system are willing to facilitate a better cooperation in sharing best practices and a coordinated well funded response to the illicit drugs threat.

In the past 30 years of presence in South East Asia the UNDCP Regional Centre has gained a significant experience and has the most relevant inter-institutional memory of national and multilateral lesson learned in drug control. This is the double or the triple quantitative and qualitative know-how than in other parts of the world.

The recent ACCORD Plan of Action clearly demonstrates that with no doubt 40 governments of the Region and their friends and 15 international organizations including ADB, ASEAN, ESCAP, UNDP, Colombo Plan and many others, do know what should be done, what can be done, how the established and clearly spelled targets might be achieved on the agreed timeliness and who should do that.

The challenge is now just to do it. The substantive consensus required is not about words, what, when, how, or who. It is rather about action. The missing link is just who is going to pay for what we have already agreed to do.

Two political priorities:

- Build stronger institutional capacity of governments
- Enhance multilateral cooperation partnerships and overall coordination and monitoring capacity

At UNDCP we have two overarching political priorities in the region in order to keep the drug control system together and well focussed.

1. Building a stronger institutional capacity of governments in the drug control field.
2. Enhance multinational cooperation partnerships and overall coordination and monitoring capacity.

We then have two main priorities in the field of interest of this workshop.

Two main interests:

- Boost demand reduction programme
- Control ATS epidemic and reduce HIV/AIDS of injecting drug users

Boost the programmes of demand reduction building upon our excellent collection of best practices. In this area controlling the ATS epidemic and reducing HIV/AIDS vulnerability of injecting drug users will be major challenges. The community based drug control methodology works and we have

all evidence in our latest book on best practices in Demand Reduction among highland people.

We are also very active in the field of Law Enforcement and Alternative development. But those areas are not on our agenda in this workshop.

It can be done, we should join our forces to do it.

UNDCP will continue to strive to strengthen our capacity to serve the international community better. This will require a combination of high quality programmes and efficient management, along with the most current technology and the talents of a motivated and expert staff. We are committed to undertake our work in a manner characterized by the highest professional standards and the fullest transparency. The eradication of drug abuse from our planet is a daunting task. But with the combined forces of all levels of human organization and endeavour, I am convinced we can and will make headway.

