

Statement by Sandro Calvani,
United Nations Representative
for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in East Asia and the Pacific at
Opening by the Thai Prime Minister
of the exhibition on
"Uniting for Human Security in Asia and the Pacific"
Monday 23 April 2001, UN Conference Centre, Bangkok

Excellencies, colleagues and distinguished guests:

1. As a cosponsor organization of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and as the lead UN agency on drug control matters, UNDCP is pleased to be part of this important effort to combat HIV and AIDS.
2. We recognize both the historical and current trends among some countries in the region where drug abuse, especially injecting drug abuse is contributing to a rapid expansion of the HIV epidemic.
3. Countries in Asia and the Pacific, have recognized the enormous economic health and social consequences that arise from the transmission of HIV from the drug injecting groups into the heterosexual population. It might prove to be the worst scourge of Asian economy and society ever.
4. There are many challenges in unraveling and resolving the risks of injecting drug abuse, exchange of contaminated injecting equipment, and unprotected sex. These challenges test our strength in protecting human rights, in establishing partnerships that cross the traditional organization boundaries within governments and across civil society.
5. In this exhibition we have two fundamental messages: that we care with compassion for those at risk or infected. And that UNDCP is resolved toward the unity of the UN agencies, our government counterparts, civil society, and the international community of support, in stopping and reversing the rising drug abuse and HIV trends in the region.

At UN meetings you often meet politicians and diplomats who talk about bad guys who deal with drugs, others who compile facts and statistics on drugs and Hiv-AIDS, and finally those who build consensus on ideas on how to deal with this scourge.

This exhibition nevertheless is also about those who are already in the streets helping the youth to find a way out. The more we come to understand, the more youth will be saved.

Thank you.