
STATEMENT

Secretary-General's remarks at special event on the International Day against Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking

New York, 26 June 2013

Earlier this year I visited the San Patrignano drug rehabilitation centre in northern Italy. I am pleased to meet Mrs. Letizia Moratti again, who is the President of San Patrignano, who kindly introduced and showed all the facilities and allowed me to meet the people.

There, more than 1,200 young women and men from 28 countries are learning how to free themselves from the curse of addiction so they can enjoy dignified, productive lives.

I was humbled by their commitment and the compassion of their dedicated mentors.

The members of this inspiring community understand that they are fortunate to find an escape route.

All over the world, illegal drugs threaten individuals, families, communities and even the stability of nations.

Today, in Vienna, at a special meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the United Nations launched the World Drug Report 2013.

The Report is the foundation for understanding and responding to this transnational challenge.

It shows heroin and cocaine use declining in some areas, but other threats emerging, such as new psychoactive substances and prescription drug abuse.

It highlights how, in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras between 2004 and 2011, the homicide rate was more than double the rate seen in Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan.

And it shows how, in Guinea-Bissau, corruption and organised crime networks are undermining development, the rule of law and the democratic process.

This is a critical, transnational problem that demands a global response.

I commend the Governments of Italy, Thailand and Qatar for organising today's event.

Each country provides an important contribution to the UN's work to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

Italy helped launch the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention.

Qatar hosts the Criminal Information Centre to Combat Drugs in Doha. The Centre is facilitating information sharing on drugs and crime.

And Thailand has been pivotal in developing international principles on development of alternatives for farmers who cultivate illicit crops such as opium, marijuana and coca.

Our efforts to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking must be diverse and coordinated within and among countries.

They must include robust law enforcement, and use all the tools of the conventions on drugs, corruption, transnational organized crime and terrorism.

But the rule of law is only part of the equation.

We also need prevention and treatment approaches rooted in science, public health and human rights.

The goal of our work must be to reduce the number of people in prison, decrease the physical and mental health burden of drugs, and prevent HIV transmission.

The work being done at San Patrignano emphasizes that punishing or stigmatizing drug users is not a solution.

Next year, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs will conduct a high-level review.

This will be followed, in 2016, by the UN General Assembly Special Session on the issue.

I urge Member States to use these opportunities to conduct a wide-ranging and open debate that considers all options.

On this International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, I call on governments, the media and civil society to do everything possible to raise awareness of the harm caused by illicit drugs.

Let us work together to help millions of people around the world escape the destructive impact of illicit drugs.

Thank you.

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- [New York, 26 June 2013 - Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the Summit of the Gulf of Guinea Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety and Security \[scroll down for the French version\]](#)
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