

Foreword of the Executive Director

The United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* is a small office with big mandates.

To deal with this challenge, the Office must be focused, fast, and innovative. For maximum impact, UNODC positions itself as a pivotal wedge to leverage global attention and resources into initiatives that can control drugs and prevent crime and terrorism. As custodian of key international instruments on drugs and crime, it reminds States of their commitments and helps them with implementation. As an incubator of ideas, a source of evidence-based research and facilitator of contacts, it seeks to promote fresh approaches and better networks to effect change in coping with some of the planet's most sinister challenges.

In 2006, UNODC's announcement of a record opium harvest in Afghanistan grabbed the world headlines and reinforced the Office's reputation for providing the gold standard for drug cultivation data.

But there is more to UNODC's work in Afghanistan than counting poppies. Having brought the problem to world attention, UNODC proposed solutions. Our proposals won broad-based support and triggered concrete initiatives like a *Good Performers Fund* to grant money to Afghan provinces which eliminate poppy, the addition of drug traffickers to a United Nations Security Council "most wanted" list and the creation of regional intelligence-sharing centres in Central Asia and the Gulf.

Afghanistan's opium earthquake sent shock waves well beyond its borders. To reduce the impact, UNODC—thanks to generous donor support—stepped up its technical assistance to Afghanistan's neighbours, which faced an HIV/AIDS epidemic due to an increase in injecting drug use. Mayors and healthcare officials in Western European cities were warned to prepare for an increase in drug overdoses.

UNODC also raised the alarm about growing cocaine use in Europe in 2006. While cocaine demand around the world has levelled off, it has risen dramatically in Europe. To feed this demand, traffickers—unsettled by better law enforcement that resulted in record seizures of the drug—looked for alternative smuggling routes, for example through the Caribbean and West Africa. These regions, already suffering from poverty and high youth unemployment, now face additional burdens due to crime and corruption generated by drug trafficking.

UNODC is drawing attention to the debilitating links between drugs, crime and under-development and trying to help States escape from this vicious circle.

Many young people are already taking desperate measures to free themselves from this trap, fuelling a booming and dangerous industry in people-smuggling from Africa. As custodian of the world's only Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, the Office has encouraged States to use this unique instrument to stem the flow of young Africans, whose dreams of a passage to Europe are exploited by criminals and all too often end in death in the desert or at sea.

UNODC also pays special attention to the crime of trafficking in persons. In 2006, the Office issued the first ever report showing global patterns in human trafficking. This was an attempt to cast light on a crime that is often in the shadows, yet affects millions of victims world-wide. At the beginning of 2007 UNODC launched a *Global Initiative to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Slavery* aimed at producing a turning point in the world-wide movement against these crimes.

The Office also worked to generate momentum against another global problem within its mandate: corruption. UNODC is custodian of the world's only universal anti-corruption instrument, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which entered into force in December 2005. States Parties met for the first time at a Conference to review the Convention's implementation in December 2006 in Jordan. Expectations for the Convention's potential impact are growing among the public, businesses and anti-corruption authorities. International financial institutions now view the Convention as a common blueprint for their campaigns to fight corruption and improve the effectiveness of aid. UNODC is responding to a growing number of requests from States for technical assistance. Perhaps the tide is starting to turn.

There was also increasing demand for UNODC's technical and legal assistance in preventing terrorism. The landmark Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly on 8 September 2006 makes extensive reference to the work of the Office in preventing terrorism and urges States to make more use of that expertise. This is clearly a growth area for UNODC.

While demand for assistance is rising, so too are voluntary contributions from Member States, which account

for nearly 90 per cent of the Office's annual budget. In 2006, donors pledged voluntary contributions for the drugs and crime programmes totalling \$US150.7 million, a rise of more than 25 per cent from last year and a 72 per cent increase since 2003.

Still, the Office aims to remain lean and fit to improve performance and spark innovation. Our efforts were recognised in the number of *UN21* awards and commendations picked up by UNODC in 2006—four out of the twenty prizes that were given out in the entire United Nations system to acknowledge innovation, efficiency and excellence in the delivery of programmes and services. That's an impressive 20 per cent of the prizes for an Office that receives less than one per cent of the total United Nations budget.

In short, while 2006 brought some setbacks in terms of drug control and demonstrated the extent of continuing challenges in addressing threats like the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, forces for good in

the world are increasingly working together to counter the threats posed by drugs, crime and terrorism. Governments, NGOs and the private sector realize that these threats and challenges which defy borders require multilateral solutions. More and more, they turn to UNODC for help.

As this 2007 report demonstrates, at headquarters and through its field offices around the world, UNODC is working hard to live up to Member States' growing expectations. We live in a dangerous world, but together we have a better chance of confronting the evils of drugs, crime and terrorism.



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Executive Director

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime