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**Drug demand reduction**

**Drug control and related crime prevention assistance for  
countries emerging from conflict****Report of the Executive Director****Contents**

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## **I. Introduction**

1. Countries emerging from conflict are particularly vulnerable to both increased levels of drug abuse and crime, including the growth of organized crime and associated drug trafficking, corruption and money-laundering. While the problem is particularly severe in States that are primary producers of illicit narcotics, such as Afghanistan or countries in the Andean region, the impact of drug abuse and trafficking is also serious in other regions where countries are in the process of recovering from conflict. In such societies, government institutions weakened by war, mismanagement and corruption are often poorly placed to counter the growth of drug trafficking and organized crime and have few resources with which to ensure effective drug demand reduction programmes.

2. In many cases the growth and impact of drug trafficking and abuse, as well as the associated problem of organized crime, are recognized at too late a stage for the implementation of effective prevention programmes. It remains imperative therefore that measures designed to prevent and reduce levels of drug abuse, drug trafficking and organized crime should be implemented as soon as possible after the end of hostilities. Failure to do so has meant that in some post-conflict countries the growth of illicit trafficking and organized crime constitutes a challenge to the development of reformed institutions such as the police, customs and judiciary, creating a significant obstacle to the development of peaceful, stable and more prosperous societies. A key danger too is that terrorist organizations often operate in, from or through such lawless areas where state capacity is weak or the authority of the State is absent or dominated by criminal groups.

3. Recognizing the importance of these phenomena, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its 46th session recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to consider specific strategies to assist countries emerging from conflicts in their drug control and related crime prevention efforts, in collaboration with their Governments and other relevant United Nations entities involved in the peace process. The Council also urged Member States providing development assistance to countries emerging from conflict to increase, where relevant, their bilateral assistance in the areas of drug control and related crime prevention (see Council resolution 2004/39).

4. Similarly, in a resolution adopted in 2004 by the Council on the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (resolution 2004/25), the Council requested UNODC, in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat and other relevant entities and subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to consider specific practical strategies to assist in promoting the rule of law, especially in countries emerging from conflict, paying particular attention to the most affected countries in Africa.

5. The purpose of this report is to update the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on progress being made in implementing the resolution. It outlines specific steps that UNODC has taken and the nature and extent of projects being implemented in countries emerging from conflict. A short review is provided of recent developments as regards ongoing policy debates within the United Nations system on issues of post-conflict restructuring and peacebuilding and the role of UNODC therein. In

conclusion, some of the challenges of UNODC work in countries emerging from conflict are briefly considered.

6. It should be noted at the outset that there is no clear definition within the United Nations system or among the broader international community of the term “countries emerging from conflict”. While many situations referred to in this report address the period immediately after a conflict, in which “external assistance is most crucial in supporting or underpinning still fragile cease-fires or peace processes by helping to create the conditions for political stability, security, justice and social equity”,<sup>1</sup> this report uses the term in a broader context, covering also situations where conflict still rages or where peacebuilding and reconstruction are already at an advanced stage.

## **II. Involvement of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in post-conflict rebuilding**

7. In the past few years, both the drug control and crime prevention programmes of UNODC have been actively involved in contributing to a number of peacekeeping missions and reconstruction efforts. These have included missions in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Timor-Leste and the former Yugoslavia. The demand for UNODC services in the field of post-crisis rehabilitation and reconstruction has become an accepted part of the overall assistance provided by the Office—although for obvious reasons, such assistance is neither regular nor predictable—and more stable resources are required to cope more effectively with the identification of needs and specification of services best designed to meet these needs.

8. Critical to effective intervention in post-conflict areas is the recognition of the strong links between issues related to drug control and drug trafficking, organized crime, the presence of corrupt practices as well as possible links to terrorist activity. Technical assistance provided by UNODC increasingly recognizes the importance of the interconnections between these issues and interventions provided by different programmes are designed, as far as possible, to complement each other. UNODC has thus provided support to national counterparts in the development of drug control and related crime strategies, including the provision of legal assistance, training and capacity-building, policy development, justice reform and prevention of HIV/AIDS. In the recent past, country and regional responses have also been developed for Afghanistan and Iraq, Central Asia and West Africa. Specific areas of intervention are outlined below.

### **A. Building effective legal frameworks**

9. In many post-conflict countries where legal structures may have been neglected for many years, a critical first step is to introduce adequate legal frameworks to counter drug abuse, trafficking in drugs and the associated development of organized crime. UNODC work in the area of drug control is aimed at facilitating accession to all the international drug control conventions, assisting in their practical application and broadening their impact on drug abuse and

drug-related crime. This activity is carried out by a decentralized legal advisory team operating from Vienna, Tashkent, Bogota and Pretoria, who are providing a wide range of practical legal assistance services and products in-country with the requesting States, including several countries emerging from conflict. The work of the Legal Advisory Programme includes amending and drafting national laws, developing national policies and infrastructure and upgrading the operational competence among judges and prosecutors in relation to drug control issues. Comprehensive packages of model legislation and implementation guidelines on all aspects of drug control support are available for the assistance of countries emerging from conflict and continue to be developed, widely used and updated.

10. Similar work is also aimed at encouraging States to sign, ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I) and to adopt appropriate anti-money-laundering legislation. UNODC has produced model legislation of particular application to States that are developing strategies to strengthen their national law enforcement capacity to act against the destabilizing threat posed by organized criminal groups. This approach is supported by technical advisers placed in the field, available to provide assistance in-country or through regional anti-money-laundering mechanisms. In Guatemala, for example, a country ravaged by years of conflict, a specialist adviser is working to assist the Government to improve its anti-organized-crime and money-laundering laws and by so doing provide a framework for a more effective response to organized crime.

11. Building effective legal instruments is also a key tool in the fight against terrorism. The nexus between drug trafficking, weak and conflict-ridden States and international terrorism is now a key security challenge. In its resolution 1456 (2003) of 20 January 2003, the Security Council stressed the need to prevent terrorists from raising finance by making use of transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money-laundering and trafficking in illicit arms. Indeed, during the last three decades illicit drug production and trafficking have become a major source of income for terrorist groups in (but not confined to) Latin America and Central and South-East Asia. UNODC work has focused on assistance in the ratification and implementation of the 12 universal instruments against terrorism. UNODC has worked with Governments in a number of post-conflict countries around the globe to promote the establishment of effective legal frameworks to prevent and counter terrorism, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the respective instruments.

12. Building stable post-conflict societies that are governed according to the principle of the rule of law presupposes that appropriate legislation is in place to counter some of the most critical threats to the well-being of their citizens. Developing adequate legal frameworks therefore remains a critical area of assistance, often forming the foundation for other longer-term measures aimed at institutional capacity-building. UNODC now has a long track record of specialized technical assistance in relation to developing legislation to promote drug control, counter drug trafficking and respond to organized crime, money-laundering, corruption and, more recently, also terrorism, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant instruments and drawing on a number of United Nations standards and norms that have been adopted through the years by the international community.<sup>2</sup> While there is no programme of activities that relates specifically to countries emerging from conflict, substantial legal assistance within the confines of existing

projects and programmes is provided on an ongoing basis in several countries, such as Afghanistan and Sierra Leone.

## **B. Promoting institutional reform and capacity-building**

13. Institutional reform and capacity-building in the law enforcement and criminal justice sector are essential in States emerging from conflict. This is either because conflict has destroyed key institutions of governance, such as the police or courts, or because these institutions have become excessively militarized and are thus poorly placed to operate in new democratic and human rights frameworks. In addition, in many such countries, linkages between government departments concerned with drug control and crime prevention (including departments or ministries responsible for police, justice, the interior, health, education, prisons, border control, local government, youth or sport) are often poorly developed. The design and implementation of national strategies specifically addressing drug trafficking and abuse, as well as for crime prevention and criminal justice reform, are often critical preconditions for success, emphasizing as they do more effective interdepartmental cooperation.

14. In response to the need to develop sound and sustainable strategies in drug abuse prevention and to address the social impact of drug abuse, UNODC acts through both a global support programme and specific in-country assistance interventions. In the area of drug abuse prevention the Office has developed best practice manuals and responses that target at-risk social groups, with particular application in post-conflict societies. Specific examples of national drug control and related crime strategies and responses are those developed by UNODC in partnership with the Governments of Afghanistan and Tajikistan and with countries of West Africa. As in the case of the legal assistance outlined above, such programmes are aimed at targeting those countries with the greatest needs, which in many cases includes those which have experienced sustained periods of conflict, authoritarian rule or civil strife. Several examples of ongoing work in this respect are outlined below.

15. In Afghanistan the focus has been on work to upgrade the legal and institutional drug control infrastructure, among the first post-Taliban initiatives undertaken. The country's legal apparatus had been largely destroyed as a result of more than 20 years of conflict and civil war, resulting in a situation where the administration of justice had been reduced almost to paralysis. UNODC is assisting the Government of Afghanistan in the development of specific responses in the areas of reform, capacity-building and training with the judiciary, supported by a national awareness campaign to inform Afghan citizens of the process. In addition special attention is being given to building institutional capacity to prosecute serious offences related to drug trafficking, so as to send a clear message that legislation outlawing such activity will be effectively enforced. The outcome of UNODC assistance to the Government of Afghanistan will be a reorganized and restructured Ministry of Justice and a judiciary strengthened and better able to deliver to the communities they serve.

16. The situation of children in conflict with the law and deprived of their liberty is critical in Afghanistan. UNODC, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, is

working on a joint strategy of reform of the juvenile justice system that addresses legislative and institutional modernization, the establishment of a specialized youth court in Kabul and training programmes for all court officers (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, judicial police and prison personnel) who work with juveniles in conflict with the law. The overhaul and rebuilding of the prison system are also part of the reconstruction prison strategy programme centred around minimum international standards and norms for the treatment of prisoners and the administration of correction centres.

17. An effective strategy addressing policing issues related to counter-narcotics trafficking is also a priority of the Government of Afghanistan and constitutes the cornerstone of UNODC support. Through initiatives in support of the Afghan Counter-Narcotics Directorate, such as the establishment of an operational Afghan Drug Law Enforcement Interdiction Unit, the Directorate now has available to it a specialist anti-narcotics response unit capable of operating in potentially hostile areas. Capacity-building again plays an important role and upgrading skills, awareness-raising and training across the broad spectrum of law enforcement remain at the heart of the UNODC strategy in this field. In addition, the annual UNODC survey of illicit opium poppy cultivation, carried out in conjunction with the Government, provides detailed estimates of the extent of illicit opium poppy cultivation and opium production. Moreover, given the links between drug trafficking and corruption in Afghanistan, UNODC plans to support the establishment and capacity-building of a national anti-corruption directorate.

18. The geographical location of Tajikistan, adjacent to major drug-producing areas in Afghanistan, makes it very vulnerable to both the destabilizing criminal threat associated with illicit drug trafficking and the public health danger associated with drug abuse. Work with the Government of Tajikistan has seen the development of activities that focus upon both law enforcement and demand reduction. Addressing the latter is a strategy of project assistance aimed at mobilizing the Government, the media and civil society organizations in a concerted response to prevent drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. Three main target groups have been identified: mass media practitioners and decision makers; non-governmental organizations working in the area of demand reduction; and youth. In the area of law enforcement, UNODC, in collaboration with the Government of Tajikistan, has established the specialized Drug Law Enforcement Agency, whose key mandate is the development and coordination of drug-related policies in Tajikistan. The effectiveness of the Agency has contributed to a significant increase in seizures of illicit drugs, in particular opiates from Afghanistan. A similar project is under way in Kyrgyzstan.

19. In anticipation of the return to full United Nations engagement in Iraq, an interim assessment mission by UNODC identified clear areas for priority assistance. Strategies to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks for illicit drug control, linked with UNODC expertise in combating money-laundering, anti-organized-crime and prevention of terrorism have been prepared and are ready for partner implementation. Attention has also focused upon strengthening specialized front-line law enforcement to counter organized crime and drug trafficking, through proposed initiatives in capacity-building in the form of the establishment of major crime units, intelligence-led policing, forensic support to investigations, mutual legal assistance and border control enhancement strategies integrating all agencies working in this area. Developing a strong, independent and accountable judiciary,

together with effective civilian oversight of the police, is also a key part of the overall strategy, along with baseline assessment in drug demand reduction, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation so as to assist the Government of Iraq in responding appropriately in these areas.

20. More broadly, UNODC has a long history of engagement with the Government of Colombia. A jointly developed holistic and multidisciplinary drug control strategy has been designed that has devolved implementation to a three-tiered system comprising drug control bodies at the national, departmental and municipal levels. The decentralized approach has supported project activities in education, health, communication, rehabilitation and crime prevention. Complementing this activity has been work to strengthen local government institutions against corruption. Working directly in the area of countering drug trafficking, UNODC strategies have supported alternative development, precursor control and a self-sustaining illicit crop monitoring programme that collates data on location, dynamics and trends in illicit crops, as well as soil use, and physical, social and secondary data on economic issues.

21. Long-term institutional reform in post-conflict societies is of great importance if government and civil society organizations are to be able to effectively counter drug abuse, drug trafficking and organized crime. Interventions are complicated by the difficulty of finding effective counterparts in countries where government institutions have been severely weakened or destroyed by conflict. A critical requirement is also to ensure effective cooperation and coordination with other United Nations and development agencies engaged in similar work in order to avoid duplication and make the best use of limited resources, including bilateral assistance. Despite such problems, UNODC has achieved some success in project implementation in difficult and often dangerous circumstances. The Office will continue to expand its project portfolio to meet the requirements of those countries most in need. In this regard, UNODC is taking concerted steps to both deepen and broaden assistance provided to countries in Africa.

### **C. Strengthening the focus on Africa**

22. In recent years Africa has not only seen the resolution of a number of long-standing conflicts (most notably in Angola, Burundi, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and elsewhere) but also the reignition of wars where peace had recently been achieved (for example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and the onset of new wars (such as in Côte d'Ivoire). This has made the continent particularly vulnerable to drug trafficking, drug abuse, the growth of organized crime and trafficking in a variety of illicit commodities. The abuse of drugs among combatants contributed to the severe atrocities perpetrated during some conflicts, and effective drug control has become a key priority for several post-conflict countries on the continent, most notably Sierra Leone.

23. In Sierra Leone drug abuse increased markedly during the decade-long conflict and there is evidence that drugs were supplied to rebel soldiers. This has left a lasting legacy of drug abuse, in particular among young men who were active participants in the war. Currently, unemployment, poverty and the availability of diverted licit drugs are such that licit control and demand reduction and prevention

initiatives are urgent. UNODC is providing assistance to Sierra Leone in drafting appropriate drug control legislation and in determining the overall level of drug abuse present in the country. Support in the formulation of appropriate drug control and crime prevention strategies is also being provided to several other African countries.

24. The links between conflict, organized crime and trafficking in human beings in Africa, most notably in West Africa, have also received some attention. A detailed UNODC assessment of organized crime in West Africa has been completed and will be published shortly. The assessment underscores the links between trafficking in a variety of illicit commodities in the region and their links to both current and past areas of conflict. Similarly, in the area of trafficking in human beings, UNODC assessments in West Africa have clearly demonstrated the link between conflict areas and trafficking. People in emergency areas, in particular in refugee camps, are easy prey for traffickers who abuse their trauma and vulnerability in situations of chaos and lawlessness. Unfortunately, too, the international presence in the affected areas may contribute to the demand for trafficked persons, especially for purposes of sexual exploitation. At the same time, war and related humanitarian emergencies greatly weaken the ability of both state and civil society structures to prevent trafficking, protect victims and investigate and prosecute the criminal organizations and individuals involved. UNODC interventions in West and Southern Africa aim to improve regional and national responses in the area of trafficking in human beings.

25. In the specific areas of drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention, often a critical issue in post-conflict zones, UNODC is working with West African Governments to formulate strategies and appropriate responses. The lack of detailed information in the region on the relationship between drug abuse and HIV/AIDS and the need to develop practical measures to reach young people and those most at risk of succumbing to drug abuse and HIV infection are being addressed through a strategy of research, national and regional workshops and regional case studies. The work is being conducted with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, its co-sponsoring organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners.

26. To provide a more holistic and continent-wide approach, in partnership with the African Union, and in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/32 of 21 July 2004, UNODC is working on a concept paper to analyse the current situation with regard to the impact of illicit drugs and crime on the African continent. A round table in partnership with the Union is to be held in the first half of 2005 in Addis Ababa for Member States and counterparts in regional organizations with responsibility for policy- and decision-making in drug and crime control programmes. The anticipated outcome will be agreement on a unified plan of action for Africa and thereafter the development of specific initiatives.

### **III. The evolving policy debate**

27. Apart from the operational activities outlined above, the last year has seen a number of important developments in the ongoing debate as to how the United Nations system should best respond to new and emerging threats, including those presented by post-conflict societies. This has included a renewed focus on issues related to drug abuse, drug trafficking and countering the organized criminal groups



involved. Specific focus has been placed on conflict and post-conflict societies. UNODC has participated actively in these discussions. The forthcoming year will see a continuation of many of these processes in the context of the ongoing debate as to how the United Nations system can best respond to new security challenges.

28. A key challenge in working in post-conflict countries is to coordinate UNODC activities with agencies in the wider United Nations system. By so doing this will ensure that issues of drug control and crime prevention are placed on the development assistance agenda at the earliest possible moment. UNODC has worked actively in a number of forums, such as the United Nations Rule of Law Focal Point Network, to highlight the importance of adequate responses on drug control and crime prevention issues, within the context of wider debates on governance and the rule of law. Since a number of other United Nations entities are involved in these broader areas, it is critical to coordinate activities effectively so as to make best use of the resources available and avoid wasteful duplication.

29. In connection with the above, it is worth recalling that UNODC has also been the focal agency on a process initiated by the Secretary-General through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which has highlighted the impact of transnational crime and drug trafficking, including in post-conflict societies. A series of recommendations emerging from this process emphasize in particular the importance of including issues related to drug control and crime prevention on the issue of peacekeeping missions from as early on as possible. These include ascertaining the nature and extent of organized crime in conflict situations, as well as during the initial assessment phase of peacekeeping missions; building the combating of organized crime and drug trafficking into the work of United Nations entities involved in post-conflict peacebuilding operations; and developing training curricula and recommending training modalities for peacekeepers against organized crime, drug trafficking and related problems such as trafficking in human beings and corruption.

30. UNODC also made contributions to the conceptualization and preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies (S/2004/616) considered in October 2004 by the Security Council. Among other issues, the report seeks to highlight the importance of developing an adequate response to issues related to drug control, drug trafficking and the associated problem of organized crime. An important conclusion of the report is that developing responses to post-conflict countries must eschew "one-size-fits-all" formulas and the temptation to import models from outside. Instead, effective strategies must seek to understand the specific context for reform and ensure adequate national participation.

31. The note by the Secretary-General containing the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565 and Corr.1) also highlighted the requirement for the United Nations system to deal effectively with organized crime. The High-level Panel identified transnational organized crime as one of six key threats currently facing the global community. In addition, the critical importance of developing adequate responses in the area of the rule of law, including the provision of effective technical assistance in this area, were underscored. The report of the High-level Panel will ensure that debate and discussion on the most effective means of providing international and United Nations assistance to weak and post-conflict States will intensify. Where possible,

UNODC will continue to participate in these processes, emphasizing the importance of a sustained response to problems involving drug control, drug trafficking and organized crime.

#### **IV. Future challenges**

32. The debate on effectively responding to drug control and crime prevention requirements in post-conflict countries continues to evolve. UNODC will seek to ensure that issues of drug control in particular are not pushed to the bottom of an often crowded policy agenda in societies engaged in the difficult process of rebuilding after conflict. While in the short term it may appear that drug control interventions can be left for later, it is becoming increasingly clear that, unless such problems are tackled, the governance vacuum engendered by the ending of conflict or the collapse of authoritarian rule holds the possibility not only of increases in organized crime and drug trafficking, but also of drug abuse, all of which contribute to a lack of security and slow the pace of development. Preventing the growth of these phenomena is much more cost-effective than dealing with the long-term political, economic and social costs, including the further weakening or collapse of state institutions and the danger that such societies become “springboards” for terrorists. With respect to drug- and crime-related issues, then, the earlier the appropriate interventions occur in the post-conflict or peacebuilding phase, the greater are their chances of success.

33. A key challenge in many post-conflict countries remains the fact that state structures, after years of neglect or breakdown, are not sufficiently well developed to implement effective drug control plans or strategies. An initial step that is often required is to focus on building greater capacity within the State itself to engage on issues related to drug control and countering drug trafficking. Also, and related to this, a key internal challenge for UNODC is to ensure that issues related to drug control, crime prevention and criminal justice, including the important area of tackling corruption, are integrated more effectively into assistance programmes. Some important progress has been made in this regard with the design of a UNODC programme of activities for Iraq (which included integrating drug control and criminal justice reform elements) and a forthcoming project for Afghanistan aimed at capacity-building in the criminal justice system in order to bolster the fight against drug trafficking. The Office will continue to work at integrating issues related to its drug and crime mandates.

34. These and other related activities underscore the efforts of UNODC to continue to provide assistance to countries with the greatest needs, many of which have recently emerged from periods of sustained conflict. Developing effective responses to drug abuse, drug trafficking and associated crime problems in post-conflict societies will thus remain an important part of UNODC work. While no specific unit within the Office is designed to deal primarily with issues related to post-conflict rebuilding, resources and expertise across the organizational structure, both at headquarters and in the relevant field offices, have been contributing to post-and ongoing peacekeeping missions around the globe. This has required not only the development of new initiatives and projects in a number of post-conflict countries, but also an effective response to ongoing policy debates at the international level as

to how the United Nations system as a whole can most effectively meet new and emerging security challenges.

35. By way of conclusion, it must be emphasized that meeting the immediate needs of post-conflict countries often requires an urgent response by UNODC, in particular in relation to coordinating the Office's activities with those of other entities of the United Nations system. Resources have in the past often been lacking to enable UNODC to react promptly and to bridge the period until the appropriate assessments have been conducted, concrete projects formulated and donors identified. UNODC requires in particular resources to participate at an early stage in United Nations preparatory meetings and inter-agency needs—and capacity-assessment missions, to conduct sound diagnostic analysis and to formulate tailor-made proposals for subsequent follow-up action. Resources to provide for immediate assistance (for example, the provision of advice, training and basic equipment) would also greatly facilitate work in post-conflict environments. While a project idea has been formulated to elicit additional funds that would enable UNODC to react more effectively to the needs of countries in transition, including those emerging from conflict, more stable resources should be secured in order to continue to carry out this critical work.

36. The Commission may wish to provide further guidance to UNODC by discussing how the Office's key position in the United Nations system as a specialized body dealing with drugs and crime can best be reflected in its operational activities in countries emerging from conflict and may wish to urge Member States to continue and further increase their financial and political support for the work of the Office in such countries.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> As per the definition agreed upon by the United Nations Development Group/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance Working Group on Transition Issues in December 2003.

<sup>2</sup> See *Compendium of United Nations Standards and Norms in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.IV.1).