



**UNODC**  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

WORLD  
DRUG  
REPORT 2017

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## PREFACE

I am proud to say that this year we are marking 20 years of the *World Drug Report*.

Over the past two decades, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been at the forefront of global research into complex areas of drug use and supply, supporting international cooperation and informing policy choices with the latest estimates, information on trends and analysis.

This year we are launching a new format, with the report available as five separate booklets: the executive summary, together with the report's conclusions and policy implications; a global overview of drug use and supply; a market analysis of plant-based drugs; a market analysis of synthetic drugs; and a thematic booklet on the links between drugs and organized crime, illicit financial flows, corruption and terrorism. We have done this in response to readers' needs and to improve user-friendliness, while maintaining the rigorous standards expected from the Office's flagship publication.

The 2017 report comes at a time when the international community has acted decisively to achieve consensus on a way forward for joint action.

The outcome document unanimously adopted at last year's special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem contains more than 100 concrete recommendations for implementing balanced, comprehensive and integrated approaches to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem.

Moreover, at its sixtieth session, in March 2017, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted resolution 60/1, reinforcing commitment to implementing the outcome document and charting a course to the 2019 target date of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on the world drug problem, as well as strengthening action towards the Plan of Action's agreed goals and targets.

As the *World Drug Report 2017* clearly shows, there is much work to be done to confront the many harms inflicted by drugs, to health, development, peace and security, in all regions of the world.

Globally, there are an estimated minimum of 190,000 — in most cases avoidable — premature deaths from drugs, the majority attributable to the use of opioids.

The terrible impact of drug use on health can also be seen in related cases of HIV, hepatitis and tuberculosis.

Much more needs to be done to ensure affordable access to effective scientific evidence-based prevention, treatment and care for the people who desperately need them, including those in prison settings. As just one example, this year's report highlights the need to accelerate accessibility to the treatment of hepatitis C, a disease whose negative health impact on people who use drugs is far greater than that of HIV/AIDS.

Recent attention has focused on the threats posed by methamphetamine and new psychoactive substances (NPS). However, as the report shows, the manufacture of both cocaine and opioids is increasing. These drugs remain serious concerns, and the opioid crisis shows little sign of stopping.

The *World Drug Report 2017* further looks at the links with other forms of organized crime, illicit financial flows, corruption and terrorism. It draws on the best available evidence and, most of all, highlights the fact that much more research needs to be carried out in these areas.

Corruption is the great enabler of organized crime, and opportunities for corruption exist at every stage of the drug supply chain. However, too little is known about how different types of corruption interact with drug markets.

The outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem and

Security Council resolutions express concern about terrorist groups profiting from drug trafficking, among other forms of transnational organized crime.

It is well established that there are terrorists and non-State armed groups profiting from the drug trade — by some estimates, up to 85 per cent of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is in territory under influence of the Taliban.

However, evidence on the organized crime-terrorism nexus remains patchy at best. Moreover, these links are not static. Relations between organized crime and terrorists groups are always evolving, much like drug markets themselves.

As we have seen with the NPS market, drug use, supply, trafficking routes and the substances themselves continue to shift and diversify at alarming speed.

Drugs continue to represent a major source of revenue for organized crime networks, but business models are changing, with criminals exploiting new technologies, such as the darknet, that are altering the nature of the illicit drug trade and the types of players involved, with looser, horizontal networks and smaller groups becoming more significant. New ways of delivering drugs further point to the need to involve other sectors such as postal services in the fight against drug trafficking.

Clearly, countries must be able to act and react to an ever-changing and formidable array of threats and problems. UNODC is fully engaged in strengthening responses, working closely with our United Nations partners and in line with the international drug control conventions, human rights instruments and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which are themselves complementary and mutually reinforcing.

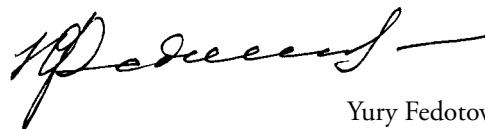
As the special session of the General Assembly and the recent session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs have shown, the international community is equipped to respond swiftly and decisively to global drug-related challenges.

For example, in March, the Commission scheduled two precursors and an analogue to the scheduled drug fentanyl. This important step will make it harder for criminals to illicitly manufacture fentanyl and its analogues and, I hope, can help to stem the tragic increase in opioid overdoses in recent years.

However, there remains an enormous need for capacity-building and technical assistance, and funding continues to fall far short of political commitment. Further resources are urgently needed to help all Member States implement the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly and achieve related targets under the Sustainable Development Goals.

The many evolving drug challenges also highlight the importance of prevention — science- and rights-based drug use prevention — but also prevention of crime, corruption, terrorism and violent extremism, in line with commitments under the conventions and United Nations standards and norms.

Finally, I ask all Governments to help us improve the evidence base for these reports. Areas such as the links between drugs, terrorism and insurgency clearly touch upon sensitive intelligence, and there are legitimate concerns about compromising sources, collection and operations. But if we want to effectively address drug challenges we need to strengthen international cooperation and information-sharing to the extent possible, to close the gaps and ensure that joint action is targeted, effective and timely.



Yury Fedotov  
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## **BOOKLET 3** MARKET ANALYSIS OF PLANT-BASED DRUGS Opiates, cocaine, cannabis

## **BOOKLET 4** MARKET ANALYSIS OF SYNTHETIC DRUGS Amphetamine-type stimulants, new psychoactive substances

## **BOOKLET 5** THE DRUG PROBLEM AND ORGANIZED CRIME, ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS, CORRUPTION AND TERRORISM

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. A dotted line represents approximately the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Disputed boundaries (China/India) are represented by cross-hatch owing to the difficulty of showing sufficient detail.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the *World Drug Report* do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Countries and areas are referred to by the names that were in official use at the time the relevant data were collected.

All references to Kosovo in the *World Drug Report*, if any, should be understood to be in compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Since there is some scientific and legal ambiguity about the distinctions between “drug use”, “drug misuse” and “drug abuse”, the neutral terms “drug use” and “drug consumption” are used in the *World Drug Report*.

All uses of the word “drug” in the *World Drug Report* refer to substances under the control of the international drug control conventions.

All analysis contained in the *World Drug Report* is based on the official data submitted by Member States to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime through the annual report questionnaire unless indicated otherwise.

The data on population used in the *World Drug Report* are taken from: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision*.

References to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

References to tons are to metric tons, unless otherwise stated. R stands for the correlation coefficient, used as measure of the strength of a statistical relationship between two or more variables, ranging from 0 to 1 in case of a positive correlation or from 0 to -1 in case of a negative correlation.

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