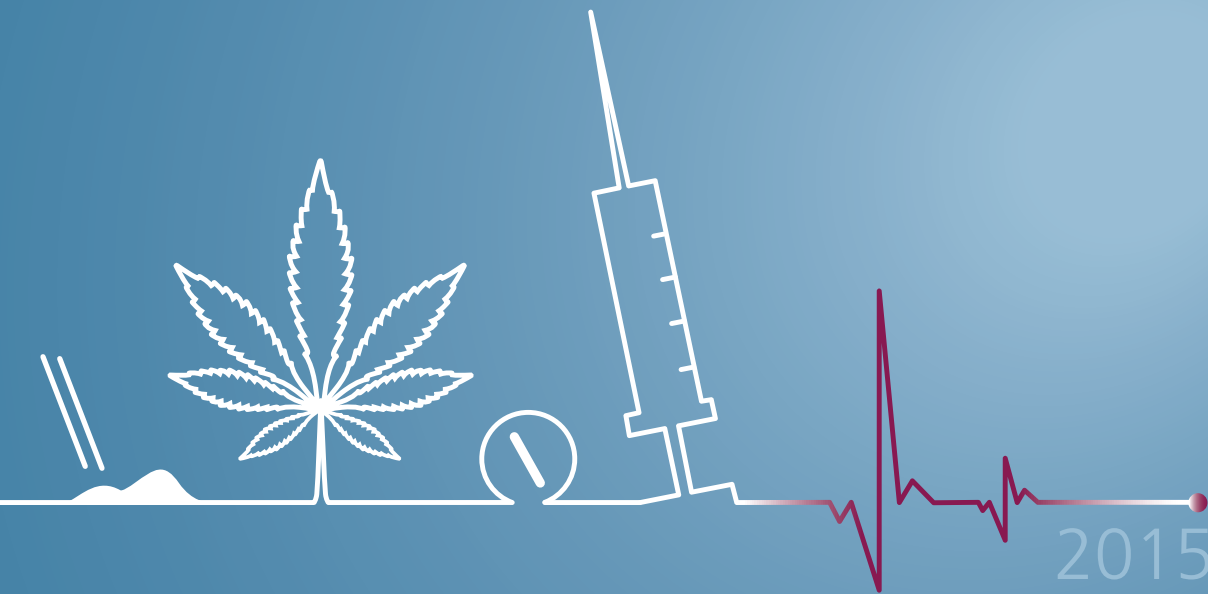




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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



World
Drug
Report

2015

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World Drug Report **2015**



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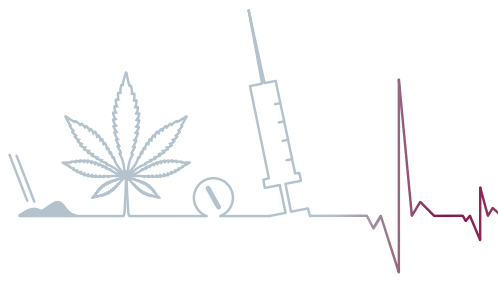
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UNODC is pleased to present the findings of the *World Drug Report 2015*, based on the best available data and our long-standing research expertise in the many complex facets of drugs and crime.

Member States are engaged in intensive discussions on the way forward to address the world drug problem, with the General Assembly special session on this topic to take place next year. This report is aimed at providing needed research input and informing collective responses to the challenges posed by the production, trafficking and use of illicit drugs.

The continuing discussions leading to the special session of the General Assembly have recognized the need for drug control policies that are balanced, comprehensive and integrated, with a focus on health and carried out with respect for human rights.

Numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions have emphasized the fact that the harm caused by illicit drugs has a significant impact on peace, security and development.

The ongoing debate on the post-2015 development agenda has further underscored the importance of promoting justice and the rule of law, and of addressing the threats that undermine them, including drugs, violence and organized crime.

Risk factors and circumstances that can render people more vulnerable to illicit drugs, as well as facilitate the establishment and expansion of illegal markets, are often related to issues of development, rule of law and governance. Policies can never be pursued in isolation, and drug control is no exception.

The need for such integrated responses, encompassing robust criminal justice action to disrupt organized criminal networks, measures to ensure access to controlled medications for medical purposes, and evidence- and health-based approaches to prevention and treatment, is more evident than ever.

The vulnerability of Africa to drugs and crime remains a grave concern, with increasing seizures of heroin indicating the region's role as a key transit area for global drug trafficking routes. These illicit flows bring with them other forms of organized crime, and undermine security, health and development in an already-fragile region.

The nexus between organized crime and terrorism — in which illicit drug trafficking appears to play a role — poses a serious threat, as emphasized by recent Security Council resolutions calling for redoubled efforts to prevent terrorists from benefiting from transnational organized crime.

Record opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan continues to present formidable challenges for the country and the international community.

Global opium poppy cultivation in 2014 reached its highest level since the late 1930s. The increase in estimated opium and heroin production has not yet been reflected in an increase in heroin supply in most regions. But in some coun-

tries there have been signs of increases in heroin-related indicators such as mortality and health emergencies, and in others indications of increased purity and lower prices.

An unacceptable number of drug users worldwide continue to lose their lives prematurely, with an estimated 187,100 drug-related deaths in 2013.

Only one out of six problem drug users globally has access to treatment. Women in particular appear to face barriers to treatment — while one out of three drug users globally is a woman, only one out of five drug users in treatment is a woman.

Clearly more work needs to be done to promote the importance of understanding and addressing drug dependence as a chronic health condition requiring, like HIV/AIDS, long-term, sustained treatment and care.

UNODC remains committed to working with Member States, as well as our United Nations and other partners, to further these efforts.

The thematic chapter of this year's report focuses on alternative development.

Alternative development presents many challenges, with programmes often undertaken in marginalized, isolated areas with limited government control, unclear land rights and lack of infrastructure, where few other development actors may be operating.

Nevertheless, the decades-long experience of UNODC has made it clear that alternative development can work, when initiatives are informed by a long-term vision, sustained with adequate funding and political support, and integrated into a broader development and governance agenda.

Approached holistically, alternative development has the potential to break the vicious cycle trapping poor farmers and to act as a catalyst for viable livelihoods that do not depend on illicit cultivation.

The *World Drug Report 2015* chapter on alternative development, based on reviews of successful projects, highlights factors that have contributed to fostering a sustainable licit economy, including transfer of skills and access to land, credit and infrastructure, as well as marketing support and access to markets.

The chapter further underlines the potential of alternative development to contribute to environmental protection, empower women and support communities affected by other forms of crime, including illegal mining or wildlife and forest crime.

Unfortunately, the report also shows that widespread political support for alternative development has not been matched by funding.

Member States have repeatedly endorsed alternative development. There is also a welcome trend towards South-South cooperation, with the exchange of best practices and local experiences, as well as increased financial investments and



technical support from countries such as Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Peru and Thailand.

Nevertheless, overall gross disbursements of alternative development funds from countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development accounted for just 0.1 per cent of global development assistance in 2013.

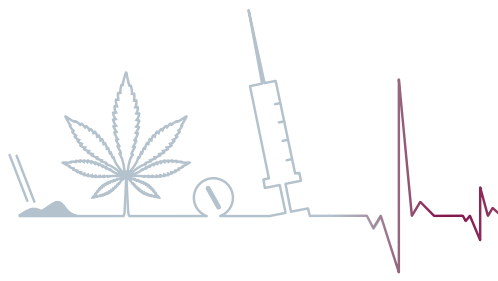
The post-2015 development agenda and the process towards the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 can provide an important impetus for alternative development efforts, as well as for broader interventions addressing supply and demand.

Impoverished farmers growing coca and opium poppy to eke out an unsustainable living; fragile regions and communities reeling from the harm caused by the transit of illicit drugs, on their way to richer markets; women, men and children struggling with drug dependence, with nowhere to turn. Illicit drugs hurt so many people, in so many places, and they need our help. The international community must respond with determination and compassion, and I hope the *World Drug Report 2015* will help to reinforce this message.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Member States for their help in producing this report, which relies on the willingness to share data, promote transparency and provide assistance. That is to say, it relies on the very spirit of openness and shared responsibility needed to address the multidimensional challenges posed by illicit drugs, and we count on your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yury Fedotov'. The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Yury Fedotov
Executive Director
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



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Acknowledgements

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