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# **World Drug Report** 2014



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## PREFACE

The *World Drug Report 2014* is aimed at helping the international community to address the toll that illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption continues to take on all our societies, by providing a global overview and analysis of developments, based on the best available data.

The report is being published at a key moment in the global debate on the world drug problem. A high-level review of the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem was conducted in March 2014 in Vienna by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, followed by a regular session of the Commission. These meetings provided contributions to a special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, which will be held in 2016. The high-level review was more than a stocktaking exercise; it provided a much-needed forum for an open, inclusive dialogue, involving not just Governments but also the scientific community, civil society and young people, on the most effective ways to counter the world drug problem.

Efforts to date to implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action have resulted in some considerable successes, including sustainable reductions in illicit drug cultivation through alternative development initiatives and welcome improvements in treatment delivery. There have also undeniably been serious setbacks, however, not least the surge in opium cultivation and production in Afghanistan, the violence associated with the illicit drug trade, and the growing instability of regions, including West and East Africa, that are already vulnerable to trafficking and to rising levels of local production and use of illicit drugs.

It is clear from the discussions at the high-level review, and from the findings of the present report, that there are no simple answers to these problems. Nevertheless, the lessons we have learned are valuable and we have attained a shared understanding of a way forward.

First and foremost, we have learned that sustainable success requires a balanced, cooperative, comprehensive and integrated approach, addressing both supply and demand. This was emphasized in the Joint Ministerial Statement resulting from the High Level Review, in which governments reaffirmed the international drug conventions as the health and human rights-centred cornerstone of the drug control system, and pledged to strengthen cooperation.

A balanced approach relies on evidence-based responses, with a firm emphasis on public health, and includes measures focusing on prevention, treatment and social rehabilitation and integration.

There remain serious gaps in service provision, with only one in six problem drug users accessing drug dependence treatment services each year. The new set of data on access to services presented in the *World Drug Report* this year can support Member States in addressing this crucial area more effectively.

In addition, for the first time the report presents joint estimates by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Bank on the number of people who inject drugs and the number of people who inject drugs and are living with HIV. I welcome these cooperative efforts, which are very much in the spirit of “One United Nations” and can help countries to address the discrimination that continues to hinder access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services, particularly for people who use drugs and for those in prison. As the chair of the UNAIDS Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations this year, UNODC is committed to ensuring evidence-informed HIV interventions for all key populations. We have seen that countries that have adequately invested in harm reduction services have lowered remarkably HIV transmission among people who inject drugs.

The *World Drug Report 2014* also addresses another important area, namely the results achieved and the challenges the international community continues to face in controlling precursors. All drugs, whether plant-based or synthetic, require chemicals for their manufacture or processing. An international control system facilitating the legal trade of such chemicals while avoiding their diversion must be very robust, particularly as we continue to see rises in the manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs, which cannot be controlled through traditional supply reduction approaches such as crop eradication.

Changes in the international manufacture and trade of chemicals present challenges. Evidence shows, however, that measures to control precursor chemicals have had a tangible impact in reducing their diversion for illicit manufacturing of drugs, and this must remain a key supply control strategy. The work of the International Narcotics Control Board and its cooperative mechanisms is central in this regard. The international drug conventions entrust the Board with assessing the implementation of measures to control precursors at the international level and supporting countries to strengthen efforts to prevent diversion.

More broadly, we must continue to enhance international cooperation, including with respect to transparent sharing of data and analysis, to help us better understand the drug problem and address the many challenges, including the related issues of violence and insecurity. This is particularly important as we move towards the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016. I hope the *World Drug Report 2014* will serve as a tool in these efforts, providing evidence to support the international community in devising more effective policies and finding joint solutions.



Yury Fedotov  
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