

# YURY FEDOTOV

Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Mr. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of this Plenary session is highly relevant for my office, UNODC.

Although there are many factors that impact upon security and development, one of the key challenges is transnational organized crime.

Due to their multifaceted nature, transnational crime and drugs are capable of undermining security and hindering development.

As we see it, in many regions of the world, they are evolving into major threats to:

- political and social stability,
- the rule of law and good governance,
- human rights,
- and economic development.

In consequence, throughout the world, on any day, at any given time, the lives and aspirations of ordinary people are ruined or reduced to misery due to these grave threats.

This has led to popular uprisings and protests fueled by the experiences of people denied healthcare, employment or education due to corruption; or who face the impact of drug related violent crime.

In some countries the level of corruption may reach 20 % of their GDP.

The Arab Spring was a demand for change aimed at political leaders by millions of people no longer prepared to accept the status quo.

After the momentous political changes, the time has come to focus on the core issues.

These include:

- strengthening the rule of law, police and security sector reform,
- combating corruption and assisting in the recovery of misappropriated funds,
- fighting against human trafficking and illicit migration,
- and terrorism prevention.



Through our field programmes in the MENA region, UNODC is working to assist these countries to progress towards democracy and rule of law.

At the heart of the multilateral response promoted by UN, must be a coherent policy that recognizes, if development is to be nurtured, we must help build the capacities of fragile and weak states.

When speaking about the threat of drugs and crime, we must also accept that they cannot be viewed in isolation.

In Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, the production and illicit trafficking of opium are leading to:

- high addiction rates,
- greater cross-border criminality, corruption,
- the funding of insurgency groups,
- and instability.

And this threat is not diminishing.

After the drastic decline in 2010, due, mostly, to the plant disease, poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has increased this year by 7 per cent.

In the same period, the amount of opium produced increased by 61 per cent.

With high prices and increased production, opium is a profitable business in Afghanistan. The farm-gate value of opium production alone is US\$1.4 billion or 9% of the country's GDP.

If the profits of manufacturing and trafficking heroin are added to this figure, opium is even more significant part of the Afghan economy, undermining prospects for a sustainable development of this country.

This situation cannot continue. As 2014 comes closer with the disengagement of the International Security Assistance Force, the international community will turn to United Nations to assume additional responsibilities in supporting Afghanistan. We need to be ready.

Afghanistan also suffers from the highest rates of opiate consumption in the world with a current prevalence rate of 2.65 per cent.

The country faces an HIV epidemic among injecting drug users.

UNODC takes a balanced approach to this issue by seeking to interdict the drugs as they travel along the supply routes, but also to address the demand while recognizing that drug use and drug dependence are health issues.

The Drug Control Conventions form our profound commitment to an individual's health, dignity, justice and security through the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

Transnational cocaine trafficking is another area where the trafficking of drugs has impacted upon security and development.

The transport of cocaine has had a devastating impact on both sides of the Atlantic.

Across Latin America, countries are confronted by high rates of violence linked to the trafficking of cocaine.

In Europe, the volume of cocaine consumed has doubled over the last decade.



And West Africa's vulnerability as a transit route for cocaine is a pressing issue requiring the resources and commitment of the international community.

UNODC is working through its Latin American/Caribbean programmes to confront these issues, but we are also working hard to assist in the promotion of a collective response among the West African countries.

These threats are evidence that, in terms of transnational drugs and crime, no country, no matter how big or powerful, is capable of dealing with these issues in isolation.

We must accept that they can only be confronted if the international community accepts shared responsibility for this transnational issues.

In addition, while drugs and crime, often appear to be local in nature, our solutions must be global.

I say this because it reflects the fact that these illicit activities form part of a complex, shifting web of transnational organized crime whose strands touch almost every country and cross every region.

Just a few figures to illustrate this:

- annual value of global cocaine market: \$ 85 bln,
- illicit opiate (opium, heroin, morphine): \$ 68 bln,
- trafficking in human beings : \$ 32 bln,
- smuggling of migrants: \$ 6,6 bln,
- ID theft/cybercrime \$ 1 bln,
- fraudulent medicines \$ 1,6 bln,
- illegally exported timber (EU) \$ 3,5 bln.

That is the money stolen from people, diverted from development, and destabilising security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must appreciate the causal connections between drugs and crime, and security and development, while crafting an integrated approach, founded on partnership, political will and cooperation.

But, in all our work, we must never forget the thousands of victims who suffer from the impact of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

Whether in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia or Benin, these people look to us—the international community—for security and for sustainable development. We cannot afford to fail them.

Thank you.

**Jim HOAGLAND, Associate Editor, Chief Foreign Correspondent of the *Washington Post***

I wonder if you could put that into context for us. You are in a unique position to observe the two factors we are talking about. How do you compare the ability of governments to coordinate today with the perhaps increasing ability of writ large criminals to work with each other to avoid or to defy protection and law enforcement. Are we gaining on them or are they gaining on us?



**Yury FEDOTOV, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**

It is a good question and it is one I have to answer almost every day. There is good news and bad news. The good news is that locally we have succeeded. We have successes in some parts of the world precisely due to this international and more coordinated effort. An example of this is when the poppy fields in Thailand were completely replaced with alternative crops. There are similar successes, although there are still difficulties in Colombia.

Thematically, one of the major achievements is the raised awareness of member states that they need to pool their resources. Recently, two important conventions were adopted; one is a convention on transnational organised crime, The Palermo Convention, and the other is the UN Convention Against Corruption. Those conventions form a solid legal foundation for countries to work together to meet these challenges. That is the good news.

Unfortunately, we are still on the middle of the road. We cannot say that we have succeeded globally. The challenge, as you could see from these figures, is enormous. No country, no matter how powerful it is, can afford even 10% of the multi-billion budget that is at the disposal of criminal networks. That is the basic problem.

To conclude, I would once again like to make the point that there is a very clear causal connection between drugs and crime, security and development, so we need to continue this integrated approach. It is also important to implement national conventions and to strengthen international and regional preparation in law enforcement, but we should never forget about the victims of these crimes. These people suffer from the impact of drug trafficking and transnational organised crime. Whether it is in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia or Benin these people look at us, the international community, for security and sustainable development. We cannot afford to fail them. Thank you, Mr Chairman.