



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

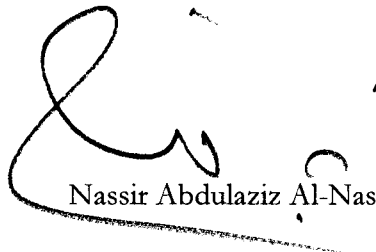
18 May 2012

Excellency,

Organized crime and drug trafficking is a global challenge that calls for global decisions and actions and an effective and comprehensive response. In order to address existing challenges in mainstreaming drug control and crime prevention into development initiatives and identify ways of improving the international community's coordinated efforts to address drugs and crime's adverse impact on development, I will convene a thematic debate on "Drugs and Crime as a Threat to Development", on the occasion of the UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. This meeting will take place on 26 June 2012, at the UN Headquarters in New York.

I am pleased to share with you the attached concept paper and tentative programme of the thematic debate for your reference. A detailed programme of the event will follow in due time, and will be available at a later stage on the website of the President of the General Assembly.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers  
to the United Nations  
New York

THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON  
DRUGS AND CRIME AS A THREAT TO DEVELOPMENT  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE UN INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING  
26 JUNE 2012 – NEW YORK

**BACKGROUND**

In the past decade, there has been significant growth in the illicit trafficking of drugs, people, firearms, and natural resources. Trafficking in these and other commodities is generally characterized by high levels of organization and the presence of strong criminal groups and networks. While such activities existed in the past, both the scale and the geographic scope of the current challenge are unprecedented. In 2009, the value of illicit trade around the globe was estimated at US\$ 1.3 trillion and is increasing.

Transnational organized crime and drug trafficking is of growing concern, and particularly illicit trade's broad impact on development. Few, if any, countries are exempt. Drug trafficking has particularly severe implications because of the vast illegal profits it generates: an estimated 322 billion dollars a year. In several drug transit regions, criminal groups undermine state authority and the rule of law by fuelling corruption, compromising elections, and hurting the legitimate economy. In all cases, criminal influence and money are having a significant impact on the livelihoods and quality of life of citizens, most particularly the poor, women and children.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document expressed Member States' "grave concern at the negative effects on development, peace and security and human rights posed by transnational crime, including the smuggling of and trafficking in human beings, the world narcotic drug problem and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons." (A/RES/60/1 at 111). The General Assembly has most recently reiterated this concern and noted the increasing vulnerability of states to such crime in Resolution A/Res/66/181 (Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity). The Assembly has also recognized that "despite continuing increased efforts by States, relevant organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, the world drug problem...undermines socio-economic and political stability and sustainable development." See A/Res/66/183 (International cooperation against the world drug problem).

A number of international conventions on drug control, and more recently the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its protocols on human trafficking, migrant smuggling and trafficking of firearms, as well as the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), constitute the key framework for a strategic response. Such instruments call upon State Parties to take "into account the negative effects of organized crime on society in general, in particular on sustainable development", and "to alleviate the factors that make persons, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity." See article 30 of the UNTOC and article 9 of the Trafficking Protocol. See also article 62 of the UNCAC.

The Secretary General's 2005 "In Larger Freedom" report highlighted that "We will not enjoy development without security, and we will not enjoy security without development". The Secretary-General's 2010 "Keeping the Promise" report (A/64/665) recognized that in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, "integrity, accountability and transparency are crucial for managing resources, recovering assets and combating the abuse, corruption and organized crime that are adversely affecting the poor." Par. 57.

As we move towards 2015, and take stock of the Millennium Development Goals, there is a growing recognition that organized crime and illicit drugs are major impediments to their achievement.

As economic development is threatened by transnational organized crime and illicit drugs, countering crime must form part of the development agenda. If we are to ensure that the MDGs are achieved, we must strengthen strategies to deliver these goals, including stepping up efforts to address issues such as money laundering, corruption and trafficking in wildlife, people and arms, and drugs. Organized crime and drugs impact every economy, in every country, but they are particularly devastating in weak and vulnerable countries. Weak and

fragile countries are particularly vulnerable to the effects of transnational organized crime. These countries, some devastated by war, others making the complex journey towards democracy, are preyed upon by crime. As a result, organized crime flourishes, successes in development are reversed, and opportunities for social and economic advancement are lost. Corruption, a facilitator of organized crime and drug trafficking, is a serious impediment to the rule of law and sustainable development. It can be a dominant factor driving fragile countries towards failure. It is estimated that up to US\$40 billion is lost through corruption in developing countries.

Drugs and crime undermine development by eroding social and human capital. This degrades quality of life and can force skilled workers to leave, while the direct impacts of victimisation, as well as fear of crime, may impede the development of those that remain. By limiting movement, crime impedes access to possible employment and educational opportunities, and it discourages the accumulation of assets. Crime is also more “expensive” for poor people in poor countries, and disadvantaged households may struggle to cope with the shock of victimisation. Drugs and crime also undermine development by driving away business. Both foreign and domestic investors see crime as a sign of social instability, and crime drives up the cost of doing business. Tourism is a sector especially sensitive to crime issues. Drugs and crime, moreover, undermine the ability of the state to promote development by destroying the trust relationship between the people and the state, and undermining democracy and confidence in the criminal justice system. When people lose confidence in the criminal justice system, they may engage in vigilantism, which further undermines the state.

This timely Thematic Debate organized in cooperation with the Group of Friends in support of UNODC’s efforts in the fight against drugs and crime and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), will discuss existing challenges in mainstreaming drug control and crime prevention into development initiatives and ways of improving the international community’s coordinated efforts to address illicit drugs and crime’s adverse impact on development, and the role of the criminal justice sector in promoting MDGs.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

The overall objective of this Thematic Debate is to unite in common endeavour Member States, the UN System, international organizations, and civil society, to emphasize the value of a comprehensive approach and inclusive international partnerships in effectively fighting organized crime and drugs impact on development.

The outcome of the debate will include a President’s Summary, which will be transmitted to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in Doha in 2015—the main theme of which shall be “Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation.”

#### **TENTATIVE PROGRAMME**

Thematic Debate will take place on Tuesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> 2012 at the UN Headquarters in New York. It will consist of opening and closing sessions as well as a morning and afternoon panel discussions. As this debate is being held on the occasion of the UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the opening session will include the launch of the annual World Drug Report.

Following presentations by the panellists, the floor will be open to delegates and other participants to share their experience and perspectives in both the morning and afternoon interactive panel discussions. Delegations are encouraged to engage in an open and interactive discussion. There will be no established list of speakers, and delegations are kindly asked to limit their interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes.

| TIME  | PROGRAMME   |
|---|---|
| <p>10am – 11:15am</p> <p>ECOSOC Chamber (NLB)</p>     | <p><b><i>Opening Session and Launch of the World Drug Report:</i></b></p> <p>H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly<br/> H.E. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General<br/> H.E. Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khaleefa Al Thani, Minister of State for Interior Affairs, State of Qatar<br/> Mr. Yury Fedotov, UN Office on Drugs and Crime Executive-Director</p>   |
| <p>11:15am – 1:00pm</p> <p>ECOSOC Chamber (NLB)</p>   | <p><b><i>Morning Interactive Panel Discussion on: Challenges in mainstreaming drug control and into development initiatives, and ways of improving the international community's coordinated efforts to address illicit drugs adverse impact on development</i></b></p> <p><b>Panellists will address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-scope of the world drug problem</li> <li>-the impact of illicit drugs on sustainable development and achievement of the MDGs</li> <li>-existing challenges in mainstreaming drug control into development initiatives</li> <li>-best practices in fighting illicit drugs' impact on development</li> <li>-strengthening strategies to deliver on MDGs – the way forward in improving the international community's coordinated efforts to address illicit drugs adverse impact on development</li> </ul> <p>Panellists: To be confirmed</p>  |
| <p>3:00pm – 5:45pm</p> <p>Conference Room 2 (NLB)</p> | <p><b><i>Afternoon Interactive Panel Discussion on: Challenges in mainstreaming crime prevention into development initiatives, and ways of improving the international community's coordinated efforts to address crime's adverse impact on development</i></b></p> <p><b>Panellists will address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-scope of transnational organized crime</li> <li>-the impact of transnational organized crime on sustainable development and achievement of the MDGs</li> <li>-existing challenges in mainstreaming combating transnational organized crime into development initiatives</li> <li>-best practices in fighting transnational organized crime's impact on development</li> <li>-strengthening strategies to deliver on MDGs – the way forward in improving the international community's coordinated efforts to address transnational organized crime's adverse impact on development</li> </ul> <p>Panellists: To be confirmed</p> |
| <p>5:45pm – 6:00pm</p> <p>Conference Room 2 (NLB)</p> | <p>Closing Session:</p> <p>H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly</p>   |