

**Remarks of the UNODC Executive Director  
Brussels Conference on Afghanistan  
5 October 2016**

**Excellencies,**

**Afghanistan continues to be the major producer of heroin and opium in the world, posing grave challenges to security, development and health in the country, the region and beyond.**

**The UN Office on Drugs and Crime welcomes the Conference's support for long-term and integrated approaches to:**

- reduce the illicit production and trafficking of narcotics and precursors, and**
- fight organized crime, money laundering, corruption and the financing of terrorism,**
- as well as advance evidence-based drug use treatment and rehabilitation services.**

**We welcome the new Afghan National Peace and Development Framework, and support the National Drug Action Plan.**

**UNODC is working with Afghanistan through our Country Programme, and providing assistance in areas such as customs enforcement, precursor control and capacity building for the Ministry of Counter Narcotics and the Counter Narcotics Police.**

**We also support the inter-ministerial council on the economy, as well as work on the rule of law and to counter corruption, money laundering and other economic crimes.**

**At the same time, UNODC is helping to strengthen regional and inter-regional cooperation, including through:**

- our Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries;**
- the Triangular Initiative of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan;**
- the AKT Initiative of Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan;**
- the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre; and**
- the GCC Criminal Information Centre to Combat Drugs.**

**UNODC's Networking the networks initiative is supporting operational links between such regional structures on all major Afghan opiate trafficking routes, including the Balkan route.**

**Furthermore, we remain engaged in supporting the Paris Pact Initiative to fight illicit drugs flowing from Afghanistan.**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**The annual Afghan opium survey will be released later this month.**

**Unfortunately, preliminary results suggest that illicit cultivation has increased well above two hundred thousand hectares, with an expansion in the northern and western provinces.**

**Eradication has been close to zero.**

**The production of opiates is expected to follow the same upward trend.**

**Clearly we cannot afford to see international community engagement in Afghanistan weaken.**

**We need long-term resources, strengthened regional cooperation and the strong political commitment and continued engagement of the Afghan government and international community.**

**Know that UNODC stands ready to support you.**

**Thank you.**