



# Global Assessment Programme on Drug Abuse

Regional partnerships  
for data gathering  
and capacity building

## *Global Assessment Programme on Drug Abuse*

In 1998, United Nations Member States adopted a Political Declaration to eliminate or significantly reduce the demand for illicit drugs by 2008. Monitoring progress toward this goal required reliable and systematic data on drug consumption that was unavailable at a global level. As a response to this need UNDCP launched the Global Assessment Programme on Drug Abuse (GAP). GAP has been designed to:

- Support Member States to build the systems necessary for collecting reliable data to inform policy and action
- Encourage regional partnerships to share experiences and technical developments
- Facilitate a better understanding of global patterns and trends in drug abuse by encouraging the adoption of sound methods to collect comparable data

The Guiding Principles of the Political Declaration state that: "Demand reduction programmes should be based on a regular assessment of the nature and magnitude of drug use and abuse and drug related problems in the population."<sup>\*</sup> In fulfilling these principles, GAP plays an integral role in providing information on which to base demand reduction policies and the implementation of demand reduction activities.

<sup>\*</sup> *Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Countering the World Drug Problem Together, 8-10 June 1998.*

# Regional part

## *Activities*

GAP improves the global information base on patterns and trends in drug consumption through a comprehensive framework of inter-linked activities.

**Global Level:** Disseminate methodological developments and best practices, harmonize indicators, improve reporting standards and increase the quality and coverage of the global information base.

**Regional Level:** Support regional information systems, encourage networking by countries with similar experiences and concerns and establish training and indicator development utilizing local expertise and resources.

**National Level:** Provide information, needs and resources analyses (INRAs) to produce strategic action plans, support the establishment of data collection focal points and human networks and provide training and resources to meet key information needs.

## *Guiding Principles*

GAP methods reflect the following guiding principles:

- Sustainability and ownership
- Developmental partnerships
- Sound methods, sensitivity to context and human networks
- Policy relevant and efficient

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## ***Harmonizing Global Drug Abuse Data***

An international expert forum was held on the principles, structures and indicators necessary for effective drug information systems and hosted by the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction in January 2000. Particular consideration was given to development of a set of core epidemiological demand indicators against which Member States could report on their respective situations. The agreed upon indicators are as follows:

- Drug consumption among the general population
- Drug consumption among the youth population
- High-risk drug abuse
- Service utilization for drug problems
- Drug-related morbidity
- Drug-related mortality

A follow-up global workshop was held in 2001 to establish the state of existing data collection networks and to develop a framework for harmonizing indicators and procedures. Deliberations from this meeting have been documented in the report: "Drug Information Systems: Activities, Methods and Future Opportunities", and elaborated on in a special edition of the *Bulletin on Narcotics*.

## ***Annual Reports Questionnaire (ARQ)***

The Annual Reports Questionnaire (ARQ) is integral to UNDCP data collection activities because it is the mechanism through which Member States report on the situations in their respective countries. Part II of the ARQ focuses on the magnitude and trends in drug abuse and was recently revised to reflect the above core set of drug abuse indicators. This revised version was adopted from 2002.

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## *Methodological Toolkit*

To support capacity to collect high quality data, GAP is developing a methodological toolkit comprised of modules on various aspects of data collection. Modules are currently under development to provide methodological support in the following areas:

- Development of an Integrated Drug Information System
- School Surveys
- Estimation Techniques
- Data Management and Analysis

Further modules are being considered to address issues around treatment reporting systems, focused research studies and drug injecting/HIV risk behaviours. A methodological training resource is also under development to support completion of the revised ARQ (part II).

## *Building Regional Capacity to Collect Data*

GAP is currently supporting the development of drug information systems in four regions:

- Southern Africa
- Eastern Africa
- Central and South-west Asia
- Caribbean

Epidemiological advisers have been appointed to provide technical assistance and coordination of capacity development activities. GAP activities will be extended to other regions as funding becomes available.

Activities undertaken at the regional level include:

- Development of regional epidemiological networks
- Information, Needs and Resources Analyses
- National Assessment Studies on Drug Abuse
- School surveys
- Focused research studies
- Training in data collection techniques

# capacity building



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For further information contact:  
Demand Reduction Section, UNDCP, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria  
E-mail: [gap@undcp.org](mailto:gap@undcp.org)