

8 December 2010

Welcome to the e-lecture

Good morning.

My name is Maher Nasser and I am the Director of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna, the venue hosting today's e-Lecture.

I wanted to welcome you all - those present here in the Vienna International Centre and those of you who are participating from other locations to the first UNODC and University of Vienna joint e-lecture. This is an interesting experiment and we at the UN Information Service in Vienna are pleased to be part of it by hosting the e-lecture in our multimedia room.

Here at UNIS we offer a lecture programme for groups visiting the Vienna International Centre – around 6,000 people come for lectures every year –from around the region (mainly from Germany, also Austria and neighbouring countries) – but for many students from further afield it is not so easy to travel here for a lecture – so imagine if we could offer e-lectures too – we could spread the message about what the United Nations is doing much further afield.

And it's not just here in this UN headquarters where this experiment will be being closely watched – our colleagues in the United Nations around the world will be keen to see what lessons they can learn from this too.

Last month, the United Nations Department of Public Information launched an Academic Impact initiative which is aimed at creating new partnerships for the Organization by engaging the academic world. It aims to bolster "intellectual social responsibility" for such global goals as promoting human rights, protecting the environment and ending wars. You can find out more about it at www.academicimpact.org

Today's e-lecture is also associated with the Academic Impact. There are several other co-sponsors too who we would like to thank for their support: the United Nations Office on Sport for Development

and Peace, International Action Network on small arms (IANSA), the International Olympic Committee, the Austrian Federal Security Academy (SIAK, Sicherheitsakademie), the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Italy, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, the University of South Africa, the University of Tübingen, Germany and Washington and Lee University School of Law.

I know a lot of work has gone into making today's e-lecture happen and I want to congratulate Slawomir Redo and his colleagues and the partners at the University of Vienna for their hard work and dedication. Today they are offering an e-lecture, tomorrow the same format could be used for training law enforcement officials in different countries.

We think this new format has the potential to reach new audiences around the world and we wish you all every success with this project.