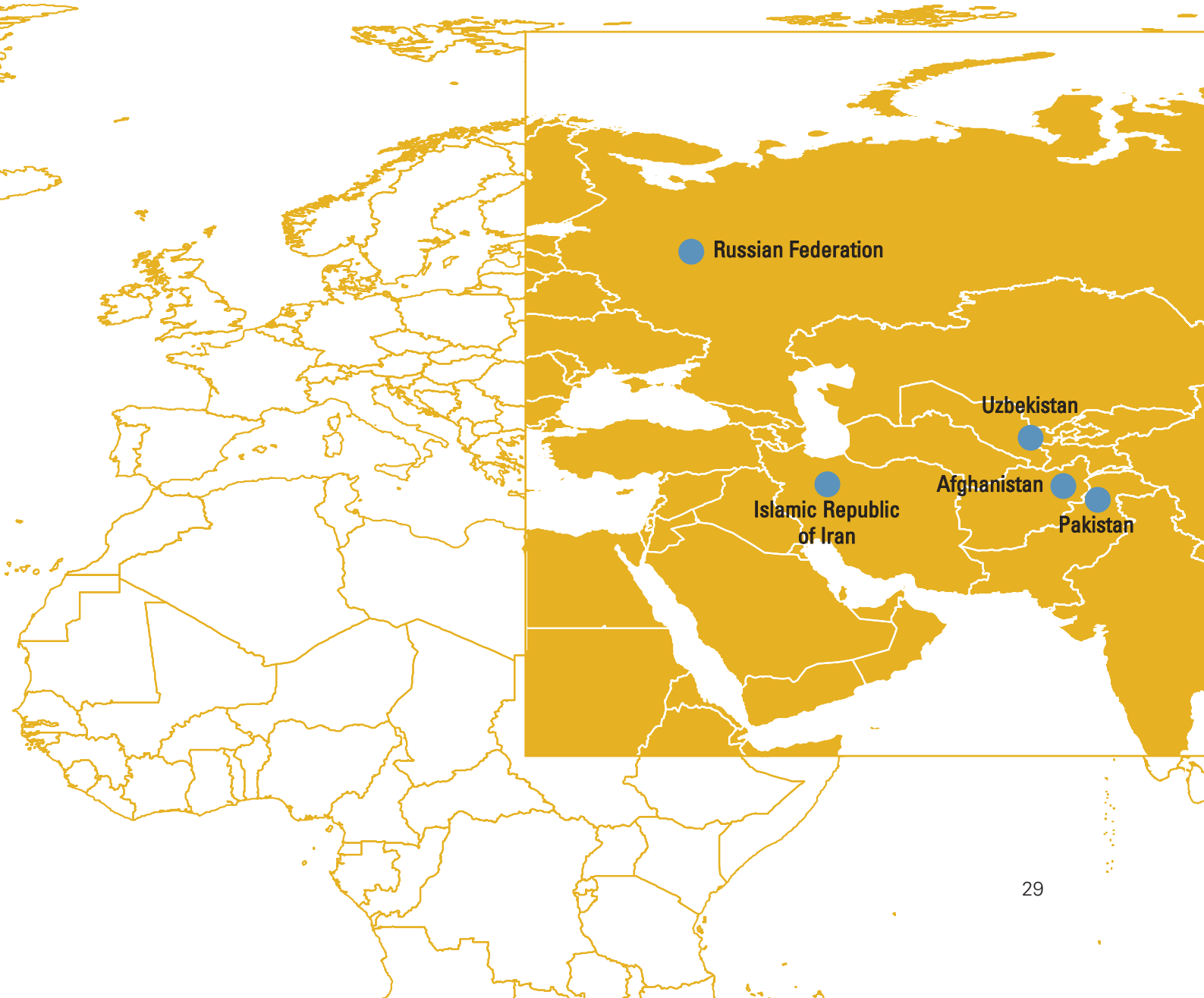


Europe and West/Central Asia



Afghanistan

Afghanistan is the world's largest opium-producing country, responsible for 87 per cent of global output of the drug. Illicit drugs are the major issue facing the country as it struggles to rebuild after over 20 years of conflict. Revenues generated from illicit drugs amount to US\$ 2.7 billion per year, equivalent to roughly 52 per cent of the official gross domestic product. An estimated two million people—nearly 9 per cent of the population—are involved in opium poppy cultivation, with few other means to support themselves.

Against this complex and challenging backdrop, UNODC, through its Country Office in Kabul and offices in key provincial centres, helped the Afghan Government to boost its counter-narcotics capacity and improve its legislative framework and judicial system. In particular, it provided support in data collection and monitoring, drug law-enforcement, criminal justice reform, alternative livelihoods and drug demand reduction.

Since the beginning of the Bonn Process, launched in 2001, when the international community pledged to help reconstruct the war-ravaged country, UNODC's efforts have helped the Government to establish the structures needed to fight illicit drugs. UNODC has assisted with the adoption of an anti-narcotics law, the creation of a dedicated government agency and the establishment of policy in the National Counter-Narcotics Strategy. In 2005, it helped steer the country towards a decrease in cultivation of illicit drugs.

Data analysis and policy advocacy

Providing factual information on current drug cultivation and trafficking trends is a key area of UNODC assistance to Afghanistan. Based on internationally accepted

survey and monitoring standards, UNODC's analysis and data provide the basis on which the Afghan Government and international donors formulate policy.

The 2005 *Afghanistan Opium Cultivation Survey* showed a 21 per cent decrease in areas under cultivation, an important achievement for the Afghan Government and the international community. However, that remarkable fall in cultivation did not translate into a corresponding decline in production because favourable weather led to higher yields. So while the area of poppy cultivation shrank from 131,000 hectares in 2004 to 103,000 hectares in 2005, opium production in 2005 was 4,100 tons, only slightly lower than the 2004 figure of 4,200 tons.

In addition to the *Afghanistan Opium Cultivation Survey*, UNODC monitored the poppy cultivation cycle and price trends throughout the year. Combining information on cultivation trends with research on specific areas such as assistance for alternative livelihoods, trends in organized crime, study of the hawala system (debt systems based on transactions with opium) and other factors, UNODC provided constant policy advice to the Afghan Government and the international community.

Building the capacity of Afghan counter-narcotics law-enforcement officers

UNODC, in partnership with Germany and the United Kingdom as the main supporters of police reform and counter-narcotics assistance respectively, assisted efforts to enhance the capacity of the police to fight drug trafficking and processing.

UNODC supported the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), part of the Ministry of the Interior, by providing training in basic and advanced drug law-enforcement and by strengthening infrastructure. While initial efforts focused on providing support to the CNPA Headquarters in Kabul, UNODC expanded the scope of its assistance in 2005 to seven strategic provincial centres: Herat, Helmand, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz and Faizabad.



Law-enforcement officers in training
Photo: UNODC Afghanistan/Zalmai



Afghan women smoking opium

Photo: UNODC Afghanistan/Zalmai

Criminal justice reform

Like many post-conflict societies, Afghanistan needs to re-establish the rule of law. A strong judiciary is urgently needed to bring criminals to justice, not only to combat drug trafficking but also to lay the foundation for a country based on judicial order. Successful law-enforcement depends on an effective legislative system and qualified personnel in the judiciary. This is another key area of UNODC's assistance to Afghanistan.

In collaboration with Italy, the lead country supporting justice reform, UNODC assisted the Afghan Government in preparing legislation—such as the anti-drugs law, penal code, criminal procedural code and juvenile penal code—to form the basis of a sound judicial system fully in line with international standards. Legal assistance was followed up with practical training for the justice professionals who administer these legal provisions. UNODC was also active in promoting collaboration between the three permanent justice institutions—the Supreme Court, the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Justice.

UNODC was behind an innovative project to support the creation of a Counter-Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force. This Task Force, composed of investigators, prosecutors and judges, was established in January by the Government to speed up the process of arresting, inves-

tigating and prosecuting drug traffickers. The Task Force became operational in July and has begun to make impressive progress in raising the number of drug-related cases brought to court.

Prison reform

Another key area of UNODC's activities was helping to raise standards in Afghanistan's antiquated and overcrowded prisons. UNODC rehabilitated a block in the Pol-e-Charkhi Kabul Main Prison and several male and female detention centres in Kabul. Similar work was planned in the provinces. The Country Office assisted with the implementation of a new penitentiary law passed in May 2005.

UNODC also paid special attention to the development of juvenile justice in Afghanistan. In 2005, a new Juvenile Code was introduced which raised the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 12 years, among other measures. The work of the Juvenile Court of Kabul was reorganized and specialized training was provided to judicial personnel dealing with juvenile offenders.

Reducing drug abuse

While international attention centred on the production and trafficking of opiates, a major destabilizing factor in Afghanistan itself was the growing number of illicit



An opium field in
Afghanistan
Photo: UNODC Afghanistan/
Zalmay

drug users within the country. In 2005, UNODC conducted its first survey of patterns of drug abuse in Afghanistan. The results were troubling, showing a total of around 920,000 drug users, including an estimated 150,000 using opium, 50,000 using heroin and 520,000 using hashish. The total represented around 1.4 per cent of the adult population. In response, UNODC was active in introducing many initiatives to reduce drug abuse and to counter its destructive effects on users.

Six Drug Demand Reduction Action Teams were established in Kabul, Nangarhar, Herat, Kandahar, Balkh and Badakhshan. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, the teams worked to reduce demand by training staff in partner agencies working in health care, education and community services. UNODC pursued community awareness-raising projects and train-the-trainer programmes to develop local demand-reduction expertise.

Alternative livelihoods

In order to stop farmers from producing opium, it is essential to provide them with alternative livelihoods. In Badakhshan, for example, UNODC has helped to provide electricity and irrigation to enable farmers to grow new crops and establish small businesses.

UNODC contributed to the development of an Alternative Livelihoods Implementation Plan, approved by the President of Afghanistan in June 2005. It conducted research on alternative-livelihood projects and related investments by donors. UNODC actively promoted the drug-control issue as an integral part of the wider agenda of reconstruction and development.

Neighbouring countries

The impact of Afghanistan's illicit drugs problem was felt in neighbouring countries. Cross-border cooperation is necessary to contend with the smuggling of illicit drugs and precursors, the chemicals needed to produce drugs. UNODC helped to firm up control on the Afghan-Iranian frontier and the Tajik-Afghan border, as well as in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Islamic Republic of Iran and south-eastern Europe.

UNODC worked to build on the achievements of the Paris Pact, an initiative designed to strengthen border security and law-enforcement in the countries lying between the drug-producing regions and the main drug hubs in Europe and Russia. It aims to put more focus on the movement of millions of tons of precursors across Europe and Asia. A further aim will be to broaden the scope of the Paris Pact to allow States to combat terrorist financing, money-laundering, crime and corruption even more strenuously.

Islamic Republic of Iran

In 2005, UNODC implemented programmes to reduce drug supply and drug demand in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a key transit country on one of the world's major drug trafficking routes. The country faced a sharp rise in drug inflows from neighbouring Afghanistan, the world's largest producer of narcotics. Afghan drug production soared in 2004 and 2005, which in turn increased seaborne drug trafficking to Iran via the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. In 2005, UNODC began a new programme to help Iran strengthen the control of its borders in cooperation with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

A watershed event in 2005 was the official acknowledgement of the number of addicts in Iran, which has some 4 million drug users. Of the 250,000 to 350,000 people who use heroin, about 145,000 are injecting drug users. These account for 60 per cent of AIDS cases. UNODC pursued prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and HIV/AIDS advocacy in Iran.

Supply reduction

Sniffer dog training

To bolster national efforts in drug supply reduction, UNODC provided specialist training to 11 sniffer dog handlers and their animals from Iran's Drug Sniffing Dog Training Centre in Karaj. They underwent four

months of training in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, organized by UNODC Iran in close coordination with Iranian drug control officers and the Tashkent Dog Training Centre.

Scanners of swallowed objects

UNODC provided two body scanners for the Iranian Police Anti-Narcotics Center to detect packs of illicit drugs swallowed by traffickers. A scanner was installed at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport and another in the city's main railway station.

Demand reduction

Drug abuse in Bam

The city of Bam was still reeling from a catastrophic earthquake in December 2003. Post-traumatic stress disorder and unemployment fuelled a sharp rise in the number of regular drug users, particularly women and children.

UNODC is helping the Government of Iran to address this crisis with a project aimed specifically at preventing drug abuse among children. UNODC Iran and the non-governmental organization (NGO) Children of Work began preliminary drug prevention activity to aid children in Bam. Local trainers were trained and a workshop package was designed for drug-prevention education for children.

A drug-abuse situation assessment conducted in 28 provinces and in Bam identified a number of drug-demand reduction responses to be addressed in future projects. Pilot drug-abuse prevention activities targeting street children were undertaken. A total of 40 journalists were trained in promoting the reduction of illicit drug supply and demand



Iranian border police checking vehicles for drugs
Photo: UNODC Iran

through the use of modern communication methodologies.

Drug-use prevention among street children

Many children drop out of school to earn money for their families by begging, becoming street sellers and working illegally. Contact with illegal gangs puts these children at greater risk of drug use and criminal behaviour. UNODC Iran launched activities with the Society for the Protection of Children's Rights, an NGO, to tackle this problem. UNODC held a workshop on drug demand reduction with several children's NGOs in May 2005. Booklets were compiled on drug prevention and life skills training tailored to the needs and the educational level of these children.

Other UNODC activities in drug-demand reduction included providing motorcycles for the Iranian Welfare Organization; launching a website on demand reduction with the Ministry of Health; a rapid assessment of drug abuse in 28 provinces in Iran; development of an assessment tool for identifying students at risk of substance abuse, and joint capacity-building activities with the Ministry of Education.

Rule of law

Strengthening judicial capacity and integrity

UNODC continued to assist Iran with the reform of its judiciary. An agreement was signed in November 2005 for the first project to be launched in early 2006. UNODC helped Iranian judges and prosecutors to upgrade their legal, administrative, organizational and operational skills, which would enable them to implement judicial reforms.

A workshop was organized by UNODC Iran and the International Affairs of the Judiciary to share best international practices on improving judicial accountability and identifying priorities for the judicial reform



Opium seizures

Photo: UNODC Iran

process, such as establishing an investigating body for corruption cases.

Paris Pact Expert Round Table for Iran

The Paris Pact Expert Round Table for the Islamic Republic of Iran was held in Tehran in September to review national border control and law-enforcement activities and identify ways of improving anti-trafficking measures. The Paris Pact is an initiative by 55 countries and organizations to limit the trafficking of Afghan opium through West and Central Asia, and Europe. The meeting brought together senior experts in counter-narcotics enforcement from 20 countries, the European Union and Interpol and focused on three pressing issues: analysing opium trafficking and counter-narcotics activities in Iran; strengthening regional and international cooperation in counter-narcotics enforcement, and recommendations and actions to improve anti-trafficking efforts.

Pakistan

Pakistan is the primary transit country for opiates produced in Afghanistan. Surging Afghan opium production drove up drug trafficking into and through Pakistan in 2005. The country continued to grapple with serious opium abuse among an estimated 0.8 per cent of the population between 15 and 64 years of age.

The UNODC Pakistan Country Office's main priorities against drug trafficking are to strengthen controls along the borders with neighbouring Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, to support efforts to capture and prosecute the organizers of trafficking and to disable their networks. It also aims to increase donor support for intelligence-based investigations and end the traffic in the precursor chemicals needed to manufacture drugs.

UNODC also works to raise awareness among government institutions, the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) about the importance of measures to counter organized crime, corruption, and drug trafficking and drug abuse.

Assistance to the Government of Pakistan

In 2005, UNODC Pakistan helped the Government formulate strategies to reduce drug demand and combat organized crime and corruption. Its work complemented priorities laid down at a Paris Pact Expert Round Table meeting in Islamabad in March 2005. The Paris Pact is an initiative designed to strengthen border security and law-enforcement in countries affected by Afghan heroin trafficking. Key recommendations were that the Government of Pakistan and the donor countries should provide additional resources to assist law-enforcement agencies in Pakistan. The experts also recommended that the Governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran should strengthen cross-border coordination and that Pakistan should revise its Drug Abuse Control Masterplan.

UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa visited Pakistan in May and met President Pervez Musharraf and senior government ministers. UNODC offered to assist the Government in revising the Drug Control Masterplan and ratifying the United Nations Conventions against organized crime and corruption. UNODC lobbied donors for funding to update the national assessment of the drug abuse situation and to develop a programme of assistance.

Strengthening anti-trafficking capabilities

UNODC worked with the Anti-Narcotics Force, the Baluchistan Frontier Corps and the North West Frontier Corps to enhance their capacity for intelligence collection and analysis. The Intelligence Unit at the Baluchistan Frontier began to implement recommended systems to collect and manage information and develop intelligence.

An Advanced Intelligence Management Course for senior law-enforcement officers from six Gulf countries and their counterparts from Pakistani law-enforcement agencies was held in November with the collaboration of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

A train-the-trainer course was conducted in Pakistan and at the Academy Against Drugs and Crime and also in Ankara, Turkey. Participants from four key law-enforcement agencies returned equipped with the "Foundation Intelligence Manual" comprising 30 lesson plans for use in training in their respective agencies. The Manual covers a number of subjects including the recruitment and handling of informers, the management of crime scenes, and how to search people, vehicles and premises. The training programme will enable law-enforcement agencies to carry out intelligence-based investigations, resulting in higher conviction rates.

UNODC continued to provide a platform for regional cooperation against drug trafficking between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. The Sixth Senior Law Enforcement Officers Meeting took place in Islamabad in December 2005. It provided a forum to discuss areas for collaboration and the exchange of intelligence information.



UNODC provided specialist training on illegal drugs for law enforcement officers in Pakistan
Photo: UNODC Pakistan



Down and out: poor and homeless people often turn to drug abuse
Photo: UNODC Pakistan

Action against HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS transmission by injecting drug users threatens to spark an all-out epidemic. Pakistan is a low-prevalence, high-incidence country, but concentrated epidemics among intravenous drug users have developed in some cities.

UNODC worked with the Government of Pakistan to upgrade the national assessment of the drug abuse situation and help the authorities to make informed policy decisions.

UNODC also supported drug-abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives to raise awareness among young people and policy makers at the district level. It developed new projects to prevent drug abuse and HIV infection among vulnerable groups including street children, women and prisoners.

Other new initiatives included the introduction of a pilot substitution-therapy programme for the management of injecting drug use and improved prevention and treatment services for both HIV/AIDS and drug abuse.

Fighting illicit drugs

There was a resurgence in poppy cultivation in 2005. Although Pakistan was declared poppy-free in 2001, cultivation resumed in the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Cultivation could again increase substantially as a result of the spillover from Afghanistan.

In the North West Frontier Province, around 1,500 hectares a year were cultivated in recent years. Counter-terrorism considerations constrained the Government from taking action to destroy opium poppy crops in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas on the border with Afghanistan.

UNODC, in collaboration with the Narcotics Affairs Section of the United States Embassy, continued to support Pakistan in monitoring poppy cultivation and encourage measures to achieve complete eradication.

Lancing an opium poppy capsule

Legislative assistance

UNODC worked with the Government of Pakistan to identify areas of cooperation with the National Accountability Bureau in order to build capacity in tackling corruption, which is endemic in both the public and private sectors. There was a particular focus on handling the proceeds of crime and anti-money-laundering techniques.

Pakistan is a signatory of the United Nations Conventions against transnational organized crime and against corruption. The Government announced its intention to ratify both Conventions and review national legislation to meet their requirements. Draft legislation to counter money-laundering was approved by the Cabinet and UNODC offered to support its implementation after enactment by parliament.

UNODC provided assistance to the Government on the ratification of the two United Nations conventions. Implementation of the conventions will be of critical importance to the country's efforts to improve governance.

Combating organized crime

Organized crime flourishes in Pakistan. The authorities face well-resourced criminal syndicates engaged in trafficking in human beings and arms, smuggling of migrants and evasion of duties and taxes.

UNODC started to support efforts against organized crime other than drug trafficking by including the Federal Investigation Agency, which has a mandate to address human trafficking, smuggling, organized crime and terrorism, in a UNODC project to improve the collection and analysis of intelligence. A training programme for the intelligence unit within the Federal Investigation Agency began in August 2005.



Russian Federation

Since it opened in 1999, UNODC's Moscow-based Regional Office for Russia and Belarus has completed several technical assistance projects with the Governments of Ukraine, Moldova and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The HIV/AIDS challenge

Recognizing the nexus between drug use and the spread of HIV/AIDS, UNODC focused on action to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS across the CIS States and to galvanize effective responses to the epidemic. In March, UNODC co-hosted with the Russian Federation the Moscow Ministerial Meeting to promote urgent responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the CIS. UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa and his counterpart at UNAIDS, Peter Piot, chaired the region-wide Ministerial Meeting to support joint United Nations action on HIV prevention. In July, a new United Nations theme group on HIV/AIDS, launched jointly by the Government of the Russian Federation and UNODC, which is also the chair, started work on promoting coordinated action against AIDS and an enhanced monitoring and evaluation system.

In 2005, Russian President Vladimir Putin encouraged further high-level commitment to tackling the epidemic in Russia, which led to a twenty-fold increase in money earmarked for fighting HIV/AIDS in 2006 to 3 billion rubles (about US\$ 107 million) compared with 2005. The United Nations theme group actively supported the efforts of the Russian Federation to meet its goals of universal access to prevention, treatment and care by 2010.

HIV and drugs

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Russia is particularly acute among prisoners. Carefully directed attention and support in the period before and after release from prison can play a key role in reducing rates of recidivism. To stop and ultimately reverse the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, UNODC applied an innovative and cost-saving approach to fill gaps in pre- and post-release care. Under a UNODC pilot project carried out in Altai Krai and Volgograd Oblast, former inmates were given comprehensive support from professionally trained staff. A network of partner organizations provided care that included training for healthy lifestyles, access to information on HIV, support during drug treatment and

Andrey's story

"For the first time in five years I can talk with my son again",—says Andrey's mother. Andrey is only 22, and he has been injecting homemade extracts of poppy straw since the age of 17. For years, he has had no interests in his life except drugs. Several attempts to undergo drug dependence treatment failed to produce any changes in Andrey's life. Now, however, he receives methadone maintenance therapy in the Republican Addictions Treatment Centre in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, which was started in October 2004 with the support of UNODC's Moscow Regional Office. Andrey has resumed his studies, taking evening classes at Chisinau University. For the first time in his life he is earning some money instead of stealing it from his mother to buy drugs.

employment assistance after release. The early results are promising: official data from Altai Krai and Volgograd Oblast showed that the number of repeat arrests had halved within six months of release among those who received support.

In Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, UNODC introduced new drug-dependence treatment schemes and widened HIV-prevention services. New outreach programmes were introduced among injecting drug users and sex workers, which showed encouraging results. Counselling and information were provided on HIV testing, reducing HIV infection, treatment for drug dependence, and other medical and social services.

There is evidence that the project has reduced the spread of HIV. In Orenburg (Russia), estimates show that the rate of new HIV infections, including among intravenous drug users, declined, in contrast to overall regional and national trends. In Soligorsk (Belarus) the rate of new infections among injecting drug users fell by 36 per cent over one year compared with an 18 per cent decline nationwide.

Raising public awareness of drug abuse and HIV

Public awareness of the issues relating to drug abuse and HIV/AIDS is critical to ultimately reversing the dual

epidemic. Among various public information and advocacy efforts, UNODC organized a charity concert—“Children of Russia against drugs”—in St Petersburg in cooperation with the Foundation Palaces of St Petersburg on 26 June, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. In September in Tver Oblast (Russia), UNODC and the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation jointly with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) conducted a large-scale anti-drug event (“Train to the future”), aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle and raising public awareness of drug abuse.

Improving professional skills of law-enforcement officers

A unified approach to training professionals in the field of drug law-enforcement and combating organized crime is a prerequisite for effective cooperation between law-enforcement agencies in Russia, other CIS countries and relevant international agencies.

Under an agreement with UNODC, the International Inter-agency Law Enforcement Training Centre was established near Moscow for drug and anti-organized crime enforcement officers of the CIS countries.

A young Russian participates in an event to raise awareness of the dangers of drug abuse
Photos: UNODC Russian Federation



Working under the aegis of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, the Centre helped to conduct comprehensive training courses for more than 1,400 officers from Russia and other CIS countries. Train-the-trainer programmes and regional training seminars conducted by UNODC's experts allowed professionals to benefit from modern approaches and solutions that will help to improve international cooperation and operational efficiency.

Building social partnerships

UNODC developed several social partnership initiatives to combat drug abuse and HIV infection in Russia. It established contacts with leading companies, which invited UNODC to work with them to develop policies to improve the health and safety of employees. This confirmed the growing interest of private businesses in finding solutions to increasingly costly problems such as loss of productivity, absenteeism and workplace injuries. The administrations of two major regions, Orenburg Oblast and the Republic of Bashkortostan, also joined UNODC's social partnership initiative. Recognizing UNODC's expertise in drug-abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention, these regions invited UNODC to cooperate with them in the implementation of their anti-drug and anti-HIV projects and programmes in cooperation with the regional authorities, the business community and NGOs.

In 2005, UNODC continued to develop its cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church. In Russia, the capacity of drug treatment and rehabilitation services is overstretched. Faith-based approaches, when combined with medical best practices, provide an important helping hand. Consequently, many drug users now turn to Russian Orthodox Church centres, which are gaining recognition for their role as caregivers. In 2005, UNODC and the Russian Orthodox Church jointly developed a project aimed at the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for drug users in the suburbs of Moscow.



UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa meets His Holiness Alexii II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. UNODC supports the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church to treat and rehabilitate drug users

Uzbekistan

Major progress was made in border control and fighting drug trafficking in 2005 in Central Asia, a key conduit for the world's heroin for more than a decade, thanks in large part to UNODC-led projects and training programmes. UNODC's Regional Office for Central Asia covers an area as big as Western Europe. The Office provides technical assistance to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, countries strategically significant in the global fight against drugs, crime and terrorism, and helps to improve their legislative frameworks and judicial systems. It is also responsible for sub-offices in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Dushanbe (Tajikistan) and Ashgabat (Turkmenistan).

Counter-trafficking

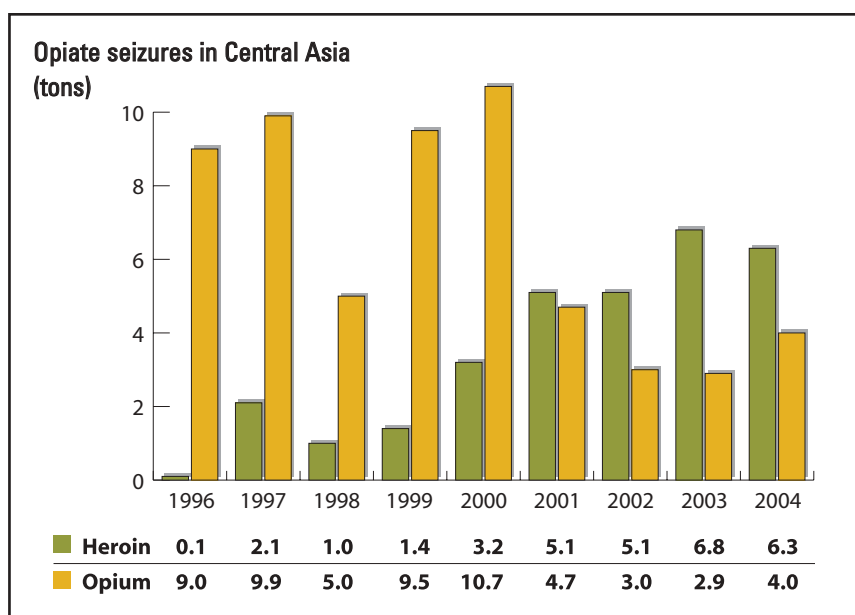
A host of promising new projects were initiated, including the region-wide effort to mobilize cooperation against drug trafficking under the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) located in Almaty, Kazakhstan. UNODC supported the creation of a single regional base for the communication, analysis and exchange of operational information as well as the planning and coordination of joint operations. The Centre is to be modelled on the lines of Europol, the law-enforcement intelligence agency for the European



Heroin seizures in Uzbekistan

Photo: UNODC Uzbekistan

Union. Liaison officers from the participating countries will be based at the Centre to facilitate effective information exchange between the various law-enforcement agencies. A more focused and coordinated operational response should greatly enhance the effectiveness of law-enforcement in the region.



The Regional Office strengthened partnerships with the region's governments to improve the counter-narcotics capacity of their law-enforcement agencies. UNODC played an active role in improving border controls at the Hayraton "friendship bridge" linking Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Increased trade will bring benefits to both countries, but there is also a risk that the crossing could increase drug trafficking. UNODC helped to forestall that threat by training Uzbek customs and border guard officials. In 2005, the checkpoint was fully equipped and became operational.

There was no let-up in drug trafficking in 2005 and the region continued to suffer from the effects of drug inflows from Afghanistan en route to Russia and Western Europe. Tajikistan, the country with the worst trafficking problem, launched a major effort to clamp down on traffickers. The 1,344-km border with Afghanistan is the frontline in the fight against drug trafficking. To stop traffickers evading fixed checkpoints, UNODC helped to establish mobile border control units that can be deployed at short notice and take traffickers by surprise; 46 officers in three units staff the fully equipped mobile units, which became operational in Tajikistan in January 2006.

2005 was the sixth year of operations of the Drug Control Agency (DCA) of Tajikistan, which was established by UNODC.

The UNODC Regional Office began to promote the use of intelligence to target traffickers above the level of "mules," individuals who transport drugs alone or in small bands and whose arrest normally does little to disrupt the drugs trade.

UNODC offered training in advanced skills for handling informers to help DCA officers identify and protect intelligence sources. This training immediately produced results, including the seizure of heroin and arrests at Dushanbe airport.

UNODC helped to put DCA operations online with an encrypted information system, which can also be accessed by counterparts in Afghanistan and Kazakhstan. This makes it possible for classified intelligence to be shared without risking exposure of agents. With its well-trained professional team, the DCA's Analytical Centre now provides operational guidance to Tajik law-enforcement agencies and UNODC's Regional Office.

UNODC focused on assisting the criminal intelligence units of law-enforcement agencies in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in 2005, providing them with equipment and specialized software for advanced intelligence analysis. Under an initiative funded by the European Commission, Central Asian police officers received training from Europol and the Dutch National Police. Altogether, more than 100 law-enforcement officers were trained in each Central Asian country on new concepts in criminal intelligence collection and analysis with the aid of state-of-the-art software.

UNODC was active in improving the capacity of Central Asian law-enforcement officers to address trafficking in the precursor chemicals needed to convert opium into heroin. The Central Asian Regional Office trained 170 officers from the region in the detection and testing of these chemicals and provided them with the necessary equipment to do so.

Because the methods and routes of drug trafficking evolve rapidly, UNODC continued to conduct field investigations. A UNODC mission spent four weeks assessing Central Asia's borders with China. This included meetings with senior officials in key agencies as well as with border officers. The mission yielded valuable information on the potential for drug smuggling and other illicit flows across these borders.

Towards a culture of integrity

A Drug Control Agency was also established in Kyrgyzstan, an important transit country for illicit drugs. In 2005, UNODC began applying a new concept to ensure the integrity of Kyrgyz DCA staff. Because corruption often undermines counter-narcotics efforts, UNODC began conducting polygraph tests on prospective candidates for DCA posts. Serving officers are also required to undergo lie-detector tests once a year. This has led to some important personnel changes in the agency and officers report a significant boost in morale as a result.



A law-enforcement officer from the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency takes a polygraph test
Photo: UNODC Uzbekistan

Legal assistance

Successful law-enforcement depends on an effective legislative framework and qualified personnel in the judiciary. UNODC, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union, helped to develop the region's justice system by providing practical training to judiciary staff on confiscating the proceeds of crime and extraditing criminals.

UNODC worked in Uzbekistan’s Prosecutor-General’s office to create a database for drug and crime-related laws. More than 200 regional prosecutors’ offices now have access to this information. The general public also has access to it through the website of the Prosecutor-General’s office, launched by UNODC in September 2005.

HIV/AIDS and drug demand reduction

Central Asia faces a new challenge—a rapid rise in heroin use by its own people, especially the young, which is fuelling an HIV/AIDS epidemic. Between 70 and 80 per cent of new HIV cases are injecting drug users. In 2005, UNODC assisted the media and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in preparing educational campaigns for the prevention of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. Drug treatment professionals were also trained in providing diversified and improved treatment and rehabilitation services to drug users in the region.

Additionally, professionals in the region have also been trained and supported to implement drug abuse monitoring systems.

A poor understanding of the drug and HIV/AIDS threat remains a major obstacle to effective demand reduction. In 2005, UNODC continued its awareness-raising initiatives on drug abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention through workshops, conferences and seminars for NGOs and young people throughout Central Asia. Most significantly, the “Regional Forum for Central Asian Mass Media Leaders” brought together 80 prominent journalists in Almaty in mid-2005. Participants agreed on the creation of a Regional Media Centre to support the production of materials on drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. The UNODC-supported Centre will initially operate as a training facility for media professionals from the region and develop regional cooperation among the main media outlets.

HIV/AIDS prevalence in Central Asia per 100,000 people

