

EGM on Alternative Development

This report summarizes the discussions of the Expert Group Meeting but does not necessarily reflect the positions of all of the participants.

Introduction

- AD as well as other development-oriented approaches, have increasingly been recognized as a sustainable strategy to address the world drug problem.
- Importance of the UN Guiding Principles on AD and UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document to place alternative development on the global drug control agenda
- AD development's scope once limited to crop substitution has now evolved and expanded, although as a concept established in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (2013) it still remains as a rural development and crop control strategy.

Alternative development - reducing farmers' dependency on the drug economy by diversifying and strengthening their licit sources of income

- Sustainable strategy to address illicit drug crop cultivation
- Improving socio-economic situations and the overall well-being of affected communities
- The importance of determining why communities grow illicit crops in the first place.

Alternative development as part of a broader development agenda and SDGs

- There is a direct link between alternative development as a development-oriented drug control strategy and the achievement of the SDGs.
- Importance of integrating alternative development strategies and programmes into larger national and global development agendas.
- Some aspects of drug control strategy are not covered by the SDGs

Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary cooperation for alternative development

- Alternative development needs to be part of the broader development agenda and involve multi-agency and multi-disciplinary cooperation, under the leadership of UNODC.
- Effective implementation of alternative development requires the involvement of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary cooperation from all relevant stakeholders, including governments, international organisations, civil society organisations, development organisations, affected communities, private sector, academia and donors.

Strategic coordination and policy coherence on alternative development

- There is a need for better strategic coordination and policy coherence, as well as a more comprehensive and balanced approach to addressing alternative development in the context of drug control and the 2030 Development Agenda.
- Need for a balanced approach acknowledging that the rule of law and alternative development must mutually reinforce and complement each other in order to be effective.

Alternative development and cross-cutting issues

- Need to address the different socioeconomic realities of communities, considering human rights and gender dimensions.
- States have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights when planning alternative development programmes and policies.

Alternative development and the environment

- As drug crop cultivation and environment degradation are closely related, alternative development programmes should include environmental aspects.
- Illicit drug crop cultivation has a profound effect on the environment.
- Responsible environmental management practices need to be introduced and practiced in the transition of people from illicit livelihoods to licit livelihoods to promote sustainable development.

Identifying root causes for illicit drug crop cultivation and providing evidence

- More research is necessary to identify factors driving illicit drug crop cultivation in order to design better impact assessment.
- More research and more data on the factors driving illicit drug crop cultivation is necessary to fully understand and be able to address them by the right interventions.
- Once the driving factors can be identified, the design of policy and programmes as well as impact assessment can be more effective.

Measuring impact and success of alternative development

- Need to measure the outcomes of alternative development through human-centric indicators in addition to the traditional law enforcement indicators.
- Approach should incorporate measuring the outcomes for people and societies (“people-centered approach”)

Alternative development in non-traditional setting

- Some lessons learned from traditional rural alternative development programmes could be applied to non-traditional/ urban settings.
- Changing trends of the global drug issues, specifically a shift between illicit plant-based drug crop cultivation to the production of illicit synthetic drugs.
- Separate paradigms: on the one hand alternative development, on the other hand urban development.

International cooperation and partnership for alternative development

- International cooperation and partnership, including among governments, the private sector, and civil society is important in increasing financial and technical support as well as ensuring the sharing of best practices.