



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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**REMARKS TO SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING
ON DRUG TRAFFICKING AS A THREAT
TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY**
New York, 8 December 2009

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Presidency of Burkina Faso for putting this important subject on the agenda of the Security Council.

In recent years, drug trafficking has emerged as a leading threat to international peace and security.

We see this most clearly in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Myanmar, where the production and trafficking of illicit drugs fuels brutal and long-standing insurgencies.

But in many other places, too -- in West Africa, Central Asia, Central America, the Caribbean and parts of the Mekong region -- criminal groups spread violence, fear and insecurity in their effort to control trafficking routes.

These groups undermine State authority and the rule of law.

They spread corruption, compromise elections and hurt the legitimate economy.

In some countries, the huge profits generated through drug trafficking can rival gross domestic product.

Drug trafficking also threatens to reverse advances in our peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan, Haiti, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and elsewhere.

This sobering reality underscores three fundamental points:

First, drug trafficking is evolving into an ever graver threat that is affecting all regions of the world.

It will require sustained political will and significant resources to counter this challenge.

Second, the transnational nature of the threat means that no country can face it alone.

This fight requires a comprehensive international approach based on a strong sense of shared responsibility.

States must share intelligence, carry out joint operations, build capacity, and provide mutual legal assistance.

So far, cooperation between governments is lagging behind cooperation between organized crime networks.

Third, we need a more balanced approach to drug control.

Such an approach should focus on reducing demand for drugs and the harm done by them; on promoting alternative development and the rule of law at the source of the supply; and on disrupting trafficking routes.

Mr. President,

The United Nations plays an important role in providing a framework for international cooperation in addressing this challenge.

This framework is built around strong UN-backed legal instruments, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

But more needs to be done to ensure that all States become parties to these instruments, and that they are implemented more effectively.

The UN is also a centre of expertise.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime is seen as the authoritative source for information on trends in drug production, consumption and trafficking.

It also provides capacity building in the areas of countering drug trafficking, money laundering and corruption.

These efforts must be properly resourced.

We should draw encouragement from the many promising and innovative initiatives that are taking place.

These include regional partnerships with CARICOM, ECOWAS and others, and strategic cooperation with Interpol and other organizations.

From West Africa and the Caribbean to Central and Western Asia, these efforts are improving drug control cooperation, building consensus on cross-border issues and promoting security and the rule of law.

Excellencies,

Drug trafficking does not respect borders.

Most of all, it does not respect people.

It is a menace to the health of societies and individuals alike.

It is associated with horrific abuse of women in particular.

Those who run trafficking operations are ruthless and often murderous.

We must pursue them and thwart them with the full force of the law and international resolve.

I call on Member States to work with each other and to support the UN in this crucially important endeavour.

[And I welcome the Presidential Statement that has just been adopted.]

Thank you.