

Good morning to everyone attending this special session, thematic session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. As a UNODC representative covering Eastern Africa, which is one of the most fantastic regions ever, I would like to focus your attention on four different issues.

One of them, perhaps is the most obvious one. We know that there are about 7,700 tons of raw opium according to the World Drug Report recently published. And out of this 7,700 tons of raw opium, we have about 3 to 400 tons of heroin. And where is this heroin from the producing countries going? Well mostly, I would say from 40-60% is coming to our coast. Countries like Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles are being exposed, very dramatically exposed into the Swahili coast, into the coast of Kenya, of course Tanzania, Mozambique and then around Southern Africa to hit West Africa. That is a big concern. There is a second axis which is the Red Sea axis, very soon. UNODC believes that in the next 24 months, we'll have an axis open through the Red Sea and that poses a lot of problems.

The second issue is the drug epidemic because the increase in the prevalence of heroin consumption is becoming dramatic in the Eastern Indian Ocean Member States and also in the Swahili coast and in the entire Eastern Africa. Even though a number of countries have taken bold steps against this epidemic, like Kenya, Mauritius and Seychelles, a lot more needs to be done in an integrated manner at the regional level.

Third issue: Synthetic opioids. We have an issue with tramadol going through West Africa, which is basically manufactured in South Asia, but this tramadol and synthetic opioids, this is becoming an issue in Eastern Africa.

And last but not least, the financing and the interlinkages between terrorism and drugs. About 21-23 % of Al-Shabaab operations are currently being funded by drugs, especially heroin.

Now what are the solutions? The solutions to the first problem, in terms of heroin being increased and heroin trafficking through the Southern route, the solutions are multi-faceted. We have to have an integrated approach where law enforcement does more and more profiling in airports and in borders. On the second issue, health, clearly, we also have to have an integrated approach, whereby we focalize on harm reduction, but we also focalize on assisting our clients, our new clients unfortunately. And we need more and more prevention at the early stages, primary, secondary-level and also at the university-level because now drug networks are recruiting via the internet. So, basically there has to be an interlinkage including prevention through the internet. Vis-à-vis the third and the fourth issues, I would say that the interconnectivity between Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups present in Eastern Africa, we have to start hitting their funding. How do you hit their funding? We need to start working again on profiling funding to cut their networks, be it through the block chain or be it in cash. Because many times cash come along with heroine in these merchant vessels.

So, I hope that these four messages are making you think a little bit because I think we need to integrate this approach in East Africa with other approaches in West, Central and Southern Africa. Thank you.