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for Promoting Counter Narcotics Efforts
in Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries

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INTRODUCTION

The Regional Programme for Promoting Counter Narcotics Efforts in Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries (“Regional Programme”) offers a strategic framework for drug control initiatives and provides a platform for coordination and facilitation of counter-narcotics efforts across the region, while bringing coherence to activities conducted by UNODC and partners. The aim is that by 2014, the countries of the region and their institutions have a better common response to countering the destabilizing impact of illicit drugs and crime.

Following the launch of the Regional Programme in December 2011, the first six months of implementation of the Regional Programme has already produced numerous key deliverables and substantive progress involving close work between Regional Programme countries and UNODC experts. A number of governance meetings (Steering Committee and Sub-Programme Task Forces) were held in the last six months. Support to substantive outcomes with focus on concrete results is the definitive focus of the Regional Programme’s work. In order to enable such support reflecting a programmatic and regional approach, the Regional Programme management team also focused its attention to assess and devise internal programme management modalities that are better aligned to support integrated programming across multiple field offices and thematic focus.

TRENDS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Afghanistan continues to overwhelmingly dominate the world drug market although blight and bad weather are slashing this year’s poppy harvest in the south, which will result in soaring prices for opium - another factor likely to spur more planting next season. According to the UNODC 2012 World Drug Report, while the overall use of illicit drugs seems to have stabilized, it is on the rise in several developing countries, especially those along trafficking routes. The 2010 poppy disease had resulted in encouraging users in some countries to replace heroin with other substances such as desomorphine, acetylated opium, and synthetic narcotics and similar trends following this year’s shortage must be assessed.

Afghanistan and the region face a unique and challenging political and security environment. Under the period under review, political tensions between the countries of the Region intensified, notably at the Kabul Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process (“Hear of Asia”) held in June 2012, the Iranian Government declared that the strategic partnership deal and efforts to establish foreign military bases in Afghanistan would negatively impact regional and international moves to achieve peace.

Tensions ran high also along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border with the alleged shelling of Pakistan troops on Afghan territory, which led to a vote of non-confidence in the Afghan Parliament dismissing both Ministers of Defense and Interior in August. In addition, both India and Afghanistan were suspected by Pakistan of alleged interference in the Pakistan province of Balochistan by training and providing arms to the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).

Finally, Afghanistan's northern border with Tajikistan witnessed turmoil when fighting erupted in the Tajik Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Region [MBAR] in July this year. The Tajik Drug Control Agency identified the leaders of the unrest as drug traffickers and pointed out their linkages with Afghan security officers on the other side of the border. The Afghan and Tajik Governments attempted to tackle the situation and a high-level Afghan mission visited Dushanbe. Two senior security officers were subsequently arrested in Afghanistan by the Afghan Government but a third one escaped arrest due to the intervention of powerful Afghan political leaders active within the Northern Alliance.

The overall regional context is expected to become more complicated nearing the Transition of 2014, necessitating an incremental but persistent approach of UNODC's regional interventions thus the timeliness of the Regional Programme that receives growing international political support. During this reporting period, the Regional Programme became indeed seen as a potential vehicle to promote the implementation of the Counter Narcotics Confidence Building Measure (CBM) of the Heart of Asia/Istanbul Process. Regional cooperation is considered as one of the most viable options to provide solutions for drug control as much as it is seen as one where mutual confidence building among the participating countries has a chance to succeed.

SUB-PROGRAMME 1: REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

During the first six months of the Regional Programme's implementation, the focus has been on: strengthening existing regional cooperation mechanisms; laying the groundwork for new areas of regional coordination and cooperation; and providing support to bilateral and trilateral cooperation efforts which forms the basis of wider regional progress. The first pilot Task Force Meeting on Sub Programme 1 was held on 8 February 2012 in Almaty, serving as an initial gathering of related experts to guide the interventions under Sub-Programme 1 on law enforcement by identifying priorities and needs for the region.

Outcome 1: Enhanced regional cooperation and coordination to address transnational drug-related crimes

1. Linking and strengthening existing sub-regional mechanisms

A first regional working meeting was convened bringing members of Central Asia Co-operation and Coordination Center (CARICC) and the Joint Planning Cell (JPC) together on 6-8 February. This meeting was the first of its kind and oriented to confidence building by discussing new drug trafficking routes and operations of mutual interest such as Black Tulip and Operation TARCET. In the meantime, a secure communication channel between CARICC and JPC has been agreed upon.

UNODC and OSCE jointly organized a workshop on International Co-operation in Criminal Matters: Information Exchange in the Fight against Organized Crime and Terrorism in Almaty on 6-7 June at CARICC. The objective of this workshop was to contribute to strengthening the existing information exchange mechanisms in the fight against organized crime and terrorism in Central Asia through a better mutual understanding of the legislation, regulations, systems, structures and best practices as well as challenges. Above 40 experts from security, judiciary and financial intelligence departments from eight

countries in the region reviewed ways and means to improve information exchange tools and mechanisms in organized crime and terrorism investigations.

Selected and trained specialists were capacitated in the countries of the region by supporting Permanent Liaison Officers (PLO)/Drug Liaison Officers (DLO) exchange to key institutions in the region. The Afghan PLO to JPC was re-appointed on 1 May 2012, nominations for the placement of Afghan DLOs to Tajikistan and the Pakistan PLO to JPC are presently being awaited from the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Next steps:

Assistance will continue to support the linking of these sub-regional mechanisms prioritizing CARICC and JPC but also extending to include the establishment of specialized counter narcotic units (SCUs) and developing standard operating procedures to support their functioning and operation. Further practical agreements and developments in ensuring the linkages between CARICC and JPC are expected during the visit of the CARICC director to JPC in the coming months. It is hoped that these incremental steps will result, at the appropriate time, in a MoU between the JPC and CARICC enabling a broader geographical scope of intelligence-led interventions.

2. Enhanced sub-regional coordination through the Afghanistan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan and The Triangular Initiatives

The Afghanistan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan (AKT) Initiative was launched under the Regional Programme with first AKT Senior Officials Meeting at the Drug Control Agency (DCA) of Tajikistan on 20th January 2012 with the participation of high-ranking delegations from the three countries as well as UNODC and CARICC. This was subsequently followed by the First Tripartite AKT Ministerial Meeting, which took place on 31 May in Dushanbe and concluded with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on *Cooperation in Counter Narcotics and Border Management in Drug Control*. The AKT Initiative has already resulted in concrete outcomes –the Tajik Drug Control Agency (DCA) has conducted 9 joint operations with Afghan counterparts since its launch, due to which 134 kg of drugs have been seized, including 114 kg of hashish, 14 kg of heroin and 6 kg of opium.

Within the objectives set under the **Maritime Regional Security Initiative (MaReS)**, the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighboring Countries supported the implementation of several activities aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation between Iran and Pakistan, reinforcing container control at the seaports of Karachi and Bandar Abbas, and developing effective coordination mechanisms. In this context, *the Triangular Initiative (TI) Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)* was held between the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan in Islamabad on 19-20 June. Participants discussed drug trafficking and law enforcement challenges and reiterated their commitments to strengthen regional cooperation. The three delegations agreed on strategies to promote regional cooperation in order to synergize efforts, specifically related to the Joint Planning Cell, joint operations, Border Liaison Offices, border management and new initiatives including a dedicated maritime drug trafficking meeting, a first-ever meeting of counter narcotics intelligence officials, as well as a TI round table on drug demand reduction. The latter is an example of active efforts to develop inter-linkages between the different Regional Programme sub-programmes. Importantly, the TI countries have agreed on a set of concrete deliverables to be implemented by the Ministerial Meeting in Tehran in November.

As part of the activities carried out under the UNODC Container Control Programme (CCP), initial formal classroom training was arranged in Bandar Abbas, Iran, from 2 to 16 February 2012. Twenty Customs officials were trained in using profiling working methodology to identify high-risk containers in the seaport of Bandar Abbas. Particular focus was given on the use of the ContainerComm, but also on methods to read manifests and Bill of Ladings to check for risk indicators. The office of the container profiling unit was also inspected and further equipped with computers and equipment, including with basic search tools for the physical examinations of containers.

In the same context, a joint Pakistan-Afghanistan training workshop was conducted in Karachi, Pakistan, from 27 to 31 August, for 15 officials from Kabul units as well as units from the Pakistan dry ports. The customs officers were trained in container profiling techniques. Using the Karachi Customs training facilities, the CCP conducted as well a training the trainer session for two Pakistani trainers operating in the Karachi container profiling unit. The latter were involved as well in the above indicated Bandar Abbas training session.

Finally, from April to September 2012 CCP conducted a series of five mentorship and training sessions at dry port locations in Pakistan for Customs and Anti Narcotics Forces focusing on identification, profiling, tracking, search and seizure of containers. As part of the **Southern Trafficking Operational Plan (STOP)** aimed at maximizing law enforcement and interdiction efforts, including promoting alternative livelihood along the border areas of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, a series of joint operations, coordinated by the JPC, were carried out by Iranian and Afghan forces in January, early February (along the borders of Herat and Farah, as well as Khorasan Razavi and South Khorasan provinces) with seizures amounting to 274 kg of opium and 7 kg of crack heroin. There is a revived commitment of the Triangular Initiative countries to engage in the STOP that UNODC is brokering. Discussions at the TI SOM also focused on possible future controlled delivery operations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Lastly, the linking of law enforcement interventions with a sustainable and human methodology, efforts to broaden on-ground collaboration with other agencies active in development /alternative livelihoods assistance in Regional Programme countries were initiated especially on the Afghan-Tajik border. These efforts currently in the inception stage will be further pursued during the next months including with the Aga Khan Foundation. In the same token, and to further promote partnership and synergy of efforts among UN agencies in the area of alternative livelihoods and job creation, UNODC and UNIDO entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, on 19 March 2012. Consultations were subsequently held between the agencies for a joint programming. Identification of activities are in process within the planned UNODC/Aga Khan Foundation value-chain programme in Badakhshan Province, Afghanistan. A joint UNIDO/UNODC formulation mission will also be organized in the course of the fourth quarter of 2012 that will form the basis of a concept note for future joint programming.

Next steps:

Through sub-regional initiatives such as AKT and the TI, the Regional Programme is continuing to ensure that the exchange of data and information is prioritized and facilitated, especially through CARICC and the JPC. For instance, under Sub-Programme 4, a Regional Workshop on Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis Capacities was held in Tashkent between 16 and 18 July, one of the recommendations of the meetings was to coordinate the sharing of drug-related information in the region including by linking up better with CARICC and JPC.

Meetings and operational engagement will continue under the TI and AKT initiatives. A senior officials meeting of AKT is scheduled for 12 September and the TI Senior Officials and Ministerial Meeting is scheduled for 5-6 November. In addition, under the TI, the intelligence officials meeting is scheduled to be held in Islamabad in early September to further strengthen the intelligence interconnections to lead to improved operations.

In order to improve the regional operational response through enhanced inter-agency collaboration on precursors, the Regional Programme worked to develop a revised model for the region. To take this forward on May 1-2, a *Regional Working Group Meeting on Precursor Chemicals* was organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The meeting was chaired by UNODC and INCB with the participation of 8 countries of the Regional Programme and representatives from Germany, Italy, Turkey, United Kingdom, United State of America and INCB. The participants discussed the shortcomings of Operation TARCET; strengths of other precursor control initiative; intelligence handling procedures at the national and regional levels; intelligence sharing mechanisms; and developing intelligence-led investigations. The working group meeting led to the establishment of Regional and National Intelligence Working Groups, replaces Operation TARCET, building upon its successes, best-practices and lessons learnt.

Next steps:

The establishment of the Regional and National Intelligence Working Groups is an important step forward in linking up the different levels of interdiction and strengthening coordination nationally and regionally. To take this forward, the next meeting of the Regional Intelligence Working Group is planned at the end of October and will be preceded by meetings at the national level. At this point, the countries of the region are working out the operational modalities and composition of the national working groups.

Outcome 2: Enhanced counter-narcotics enforcement capacity through delivery of better coordinated training programmes across the region

An assessment of current counter-narcotics training capacities in the region is under-way profiling curricula, training materials and student management. These will form part of a joint report, which will be finalized after the *Regional Workshop on Strengthening the Coordination and Quality of Counter-Narcotics Training Programmes Across the Region* scheduled for 27-28 September in Ashgabat.

The holding of the *Counter Narcotics Training Commandants' Meeting* among TI countries was held in Islamabad on 21 May as a result of the recommendations of the TI Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) held in Tehran on 31 May 2011. The meeting explored ways to integrate existing training resources through the harmonization of interventions and activities, first among the TI countries. The three countries presented their areas of training expertise and offered support to each other in terms of counter-narcotics specialist training - for instance Iran offered specialist training in identification of drugs/precursors, Afghanistan proposed training on clandestine laboratories and Pakistan offered to provide specialist training in terms of methods of concealment.

A dedicated training component to be administered in cooperation with the Domodedovo training institute was launched following technical consultations. This component will entail another important step forward in strengthening counter-narcotics capacities in Afghanistan as law enforcement officers will be receiving training at one of the best regional training institutes. Under this component, three individual training sessions are planned for 2012 starting with the first training session in Domodedovo Training Institute in September where 20 Afghan CNPA officers will participate.

Next steps:

Building upon the results of the Commandants' Meeting (above), preparatory and consultative work for a wider Regional Workshop on Strengthening the Coordination and Quality of Counter-Narcotics Training Programmes Across the Region (scheduled for 27-28 September in Ashgabat) involving all the eight Regional Programme member countries as well as regional training academies such as the Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Crime (TADOC) and Domo was carried out. In addition, the development of standardized curricula is to begin in the fourth quarter of 2012.

The cynology ("sniffer dog") training component for relevant law enforcement in the region (at the specialized institute at the Russian city Rostov-na-Donu) will be implemented in the second half of 2012.

Outcome 3: Increased use of forensic evidence in investigating and prosecuting transnational crimes

A region-wide assessment has been conducted in all Regional Programme countries to obtain an accurate understanding of the forensic laboratory capacity in the region for evidence-based investigations and generation of accurate data for production and trafficking trends including, product profiles. Early findings which are currently being analyzed will help identify areas requiring development, potentially ranging from forensic quality assurance requirements to regional cooperation, in order to enable the generation of accurate and reliable laboratory data using internationally accepted methods and standards. These issues, when addressed, would contribute to a better understanding of distribution routes for heroin and precursor chemicals and feed into improved forensic evidence-based regional investigations.

Next steps:

The Laboratory and Scientific Affairs Section (LSS) is expected to advance work during the second half of the year on the regional network of criminal justice laboratory staff and the promotion of forensic evidence-based investigations.

SUB-PROGRAMME 2: INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CRIMINAL MATTERS

Sub-Programme 2 on International/Regional Cooperation in Legal Matters through its achievements during the past six months has contributed to the project's overall objective including by a) building trust and confidence among the judicial authorities/institutions of the countries in the region and b) provide relevant assistance and training to senior experts from the eight regional countries to build their capacities in strengthening international/regional cooperation in criminal matters (especially with regard to harmonization of legal systems in addressing MLA, extradition and AML/CFT related matters).

The Regional Programme has been effective in advancing the dialogue on regional cooperation in legal matters and this has yielded immediate results, which can be illustrated, for instance, by the signature of the first Memorandum of Understanding on AML/CFT between the heads of the FIUs of Iran and Tajikistan. Importantly, under Sub-Programme 2, two Task Force meetings have already been held. The first was held on 27 January in Dushanbe where several concrete priority actions were identified and endorsed at the 14 March Regional Programme Steering Committee meeting. The second Task Force meeting took place in Vienna on 18 May to further discuss progress made under Sub-Programme 2 and identify challenges and priorities for the remainder of the year.

In addition, through the launch of the CASH Initiative, a significant step forward has been taken in the fight against the illegal drug trade by strengthening regional countries' enforcement capacities in countering money flows and confiscating the assets of drug trafficking networks as well as enhancing regional cooperation among relevant enforcement stakeholders including FIUs.

Outcome 4: Increased regional cooperation in narcotics-related criminal cases

A mission was conducted by the UNODC Regional Cooperation Advisor to Iran on 8-9 January 2012) to brief the relevant Iranian national authorities (including Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Judiciary) on the importance of the ratification of the UNTOC and provide legal assistance in proceeding with the ratification process.

A Regional Workshop on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters was held between 16 and 18 May at the UNODC Headquarters in Vienna. The workshop brought together senior experts from Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan with the aim to exchange information and discuss the harmonization of national criminal legislation under the various United Nations Drugs and Crime Conventions to enable and facilitate international/regional cooperation in criminal matters. At one of the side events organized alongside the workshop, including a dedicated Sub-Programme 2 Task Force meeting, a meeting of the Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) of the 8 countries was convened resulting in a regional "FIU to FIU meeting", as well as trilateral and bilateral meetings between judicial and anti-money laundering officials.

UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch drafted a summary report of available information and data on the implementation of articles related to international cooperation in criminal matters under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) for the countries of the region and to illustrate some gaps in their implementation. This summary report (produced under Sub-Programme 4 of the Regional Programme on Trends and Analysis) was used to inform interventions under Sub-Programme 2 and is an example of the integrated nature of work conducted under the Regional Programme.

In order to identify the priority needs of the Regional Programme countries on international/regional cooperation in criminal matters, a legal assessment mission to Kyrgyzstan was conducted successfully from 27 to 29 June where UNODC experts met with relevant Kyrgyz national counterparts with the purpose of collecting information and data on Kyrgyz national legislation/institutional frameworks (with a focus on UNTOC and UNCAC as well as the drug and terrorism conventions) and understanding Kyrgyzstan's priority needs and challenges towards international and regional cooperation in legal matters. Guidance/assistance on the implementation of the relevant articles of the UN drugs, crime and terrorism legal instruments was provided.

A CD containing relevant laws of the Regional Programme countries as well as available UN handbooks/guidelines for international cooperation (on MLA, extradition, and exchange of AML/CFT information) has been prepared and distributed among the Regional Programme countries' relevant judicial institutions in order to facilitate information exchange and awareness among key counterparts.

Next steps:

The momentum of activities taking place under Sub-Programme 2 will remain high in the second half of the year including through the First General Prosecutors' regional meeting in CARICC/Almaty in October 2012, as well as a Regional Workshop on the establishment of a Central Authority and using the MLA Request Writer Tool for Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in October/November 2012. The focus is on building links, enhancing awareness and understanding on legal matters. An Assessment Mission to Turkmenistan on MLA, extradition as well as AML/CFT is also scheduled in October/November 2012 to further understand needs and position assistance in Central Asia.

Outcome 5: Enhanced regional cooperation on illicit money flows related to narcotics cases

The Regional Workshop on Cash Smuggling was held in Dushanbe on 25-27 January 2012, and served to lay the foundation for the CASH Initiative. The CASH Initiative aims to: strengthen FIUs in the Triangular Initiative (TI) and Central Asian countries; establish Financial Intelligence Task Forces at the country level to address the identification and tracking of financial flows and assets deriving from drug trafficking; establish a mechanism for regular exchange of information and trend analysis on money laundering and asset recovery among the Task Forces of the countries; develop joint plan of actions for the finalization of operations for the confiscation and seizure of financial and other criminal assets; and promote bilateral/multilateral for the planning of wider/international police operations.

The Regional Computer Based Training (CBT) on Money Laundering was conducted on 12-15 February 2012 in Tehran to increase the momentum for regional cooperation on tackling illicit money flows created in Dushanbe. In conjunction with this training, a second regional FIU to FIU meeting was held in Tehran, with the exchange of concrete cases of suspicious financial transaction (SFT).

A significant achievement under the CASH Initiative took place on 17 May at the regional "FIU to FIU meeting" with the signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding on AML/CFT between the heads of the FIUs of Iran and Tajikistan (this was circulated to the Regional Programme countries at the Regional Workshop on Cash Smuggling, held in Dushanbe on 25-27 January 2012). A number of "FIU-FIU" meetings were organized during the reporting period to improve operational cooperation and exchange of information between the Regional Programme countries, as well as build networks with the overall aim of countering money flows and confiscating the assets of drug trafficking networks.

An assessment mission was conducted by the Regional AML/CFT Expert to Afghanistan on 19-20 June to organize a mentorship mission to Kabul and identifying a number of thematic areas of work. In addition, a Regional Rapid Assessment has been drafted to address: (i) the problem of regional illicit financial flows and money laundering originated by the production and trafficking of opiates in Afghanistan, (ii) the improvement of cooperation and sharing of information amongst Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and relevant AML/CFT bodies including Justice and General Prosecutor Offices, and (iii) the provision of ad-hoc mentorship and technical assistance to FIUs aiming at improving national AML/CFT counter-capacity.

Further strengthening the role of the Triangular Initiative countries in the area of AMF/CFT, two Triangular AML Expert Meetings were held - the first in Dushanbe on 27 January and the second in Vienna on 17 May. Both expert meetings contributed to an increased level of information-sharing and networking between the TI countries.

Next steps:

The CASH Initiative remains a priority for Sub-Programme 2 interventions. Having more countries of the region sign the regional Memorandum of Understanding on AML/CFT, is a key focus. Additional FIU-to-FIU meetings are planned to improve operational cooperation and exchange of information between the Regional Programme countries, as well as build networks with the overall aim of countering money flows and confiscating the assets of drug trafficking networks. The First Asset Recovery Regional Workshop will take place in October 2012 and will provide an opportunity for better coordination and cooperation in asset recovery in the region. Also planned is the continued enhancement of regional capacities through the Second AML/CBT Training (coupled with the 6th FIU to FIU meeting in Tehran in November 2012).

SUB-PROGRAMME 3: PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF ADDICTION AMONG VULNERABLE GROUPS

During the first six months of implementation, work under Sub-Programme 3 on Prevention and Treatment of Addiction Among Vulnerable Groups has prioritized a balanced approach, with a focus on facilitating regional cooperation to prevent and mitigate human suffering caused by illicit drugs. This has resulted in some notable progress especially in the area of drug prevention with the first-ever regional family skills workshop held in Istanbul, June 2012. In addition, recognizing the increasing drug use among migrant populations such as Afghan refugees in the region and returnees to Afghanistan, assistance to these vulnerable groups has been prioritized and tailored by building on a series of pilot activities of comprehensive HIV prevention and care services to Afghan refugee injecting and non-injecting drug users in Iran and Pakistan and returnees in Afghanistan.

Priorities for the second half of the year include some innovative areas of work such as the development of toolkits/guidelines/protocols for law enforcement agencies to enable early identification of drug users, ethical engagement, human rights of drug users and referral pathways to treatment, regional guidelines/protocols for effective systems of alternatives to incarceration for drug using offenders.

Outcome 6: Increased capacities to implement comprehensive scientific evidence-based drug prevention programmes

A first-ever regional family skills-based training was held in Istanbul in 19-20 June with participation of all eight Regional Programme countries. The goal of the meeting was to enhance the exchange of regional expertise between trainers, policy makers of the concerned countries, review the implementation of family skills training programmes in the Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and to advocate for adoption of evidence based family skills programmes in Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. The training element was useful in the transfer of expert knowledge to the participants. Discussions resulted in concrete commitments to develop regional activities to improve exchange of expertise between the eight Regional Programme countries with a view for scaling – up and ensuring the sustainability of family skills training programmes.

Next steps:

It is anticipated that this training will result in concrete prevention and family-skills activities to improve exchange of expertise between the eight Regional Programme countries with a view for scaling – up and ensuring the sustainability of family skills training programmes. As a follow-up to this training, preparatory consultations are taking place to advance work in the area of prevention to develop master trainers to train national trainers in each country on family skills-based training, scheduled for the latter half of the year.

Outcome 7: Increased capacity to deliver scientific evidence-based, drug dependence treatment and care services

The creation of a first-ever directory at the regional level of providers of expertise in drug demand reduction to facilitate contacts in the region and provide an overview of facilities and services available to vulnerable populations was prioritized as an initial deliverable under this outcome to inform subsequent interventions.

Furthermore, a regional network of drug demand reduction experts, which would assist efforts in standardization and enable the exchange of best-practices has been facilitated. As evidence for treatment methods and outcomes are not easily accessible to practitioners and often not disseminated throughout the region, this network would also provide better treatment service delivery information and ultimately lead to better allocation of resources and improved effectiveness.

Work has also advanced on the identification and eventual linking of “centres of excellence” and specialized NGOs in the region. The focus on the second half of the year will be on delivering specialized training and exchange of best-practices by taking advantage of the expertise available in the region.

Next steps:

Illustrating the integrated nature of work conducted under the Regional Programme, at the TI meeting on 19-20 June in Islamabad, the three delegations agreed to organize the first-ever TI round table on drug demand reduction in Tehran in the latter half of the year. In addition, a regional meeting for the review and adaptation of minimum quality standards on drug dependence treatment for the region will also be organized in Tehran at the start of next year. Both of these activities will involve the regional network of drug demand reduction experts. Innovative work will also be carried out develop toolkit/guidelines/protocols for law enforcement agencies to enable early identification of drug users, ethical engagement, human rights of drug users and referral pathways to treatment led by Pakistan. The development of regional guidelines/protocols for effective systems of alternatives to incarceration for drug using offenders will be led by ROCA/POKAZ in the coming months.

Outcome 8: Increased capacity to respond to and reduce the spread of drug related HIV/AIDS among high-risk populations

Recognizing the increasing drug use among migrant populations such as Afghan refugees in the region and returnees to Afghanistan, assistance to these vulnerable groups has been prioritized and tailored by building on a series of pilot activities of comprehensive HIV prevention and care services to Afghan refugee injecting and non-injecting drug users in Iran and Pakistan and returnees in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: In line with the Government of Afghanistan’s strategy, and in order to complement the drug treatment and HIV/AIDS prevention and care work of other organizations, UNODC supports interventions in two border locations in Bekrabad, Herat and Markow, Nangrahar. In addition activities

are linked with UNHCR at both border locations of Islam Qala in Herat and Torkham in Nangrahar. The UNODC supported NGO also provided awareness sessions and training to over 300 returnees from Pakistan at the UNHCR local camps in the province up till May 2012. In total over 700 drug users (of which 313 are female drug users) were reached with services from January to April 2012.

Iran: In Iran 4 Drop-in Centres (DIC) were supported in the cities of Mashhad, Varamin, and Shahr-e-Rey for 2012. The DICs provided HIV prevention services to Afghan refugees as well as Iranian nationals. The services include needle and syringe distribution, condom promotion and distribution, methadone maintenance treatment, first-aid, wound care, provision of food, basic counseling, training on HIV and Drugs, referral for HIV Voluntary Counseling and Testing and other needed services (like psychiatric counseling, dentistry and hospitals). Further training is envisaged in the second half of 2012 to increase the technical capacity of the centres in various aspects of service provision including the management of the increasing use of amphetamine type stimulants including ATS related HIV prevention.

Pakistan: Two Drop-in Centres were established to provide comprehensive HIV prevention and care services to Afghan refugee drug users in Kot Chandana refugee camp, Mianwali and in Mera Kachori refugee camp, Peshawar. Services being provided include assessment and motivational counselling, drug abuse treatment, testing for HIV, Hepatitis B and C, primary health care, referral for advanced medical care, VCCT, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse awareness raising activities for youth and community, condom distribution and development and distribution of IEC material. This assistance will continue to be provided at the two project sites up till 31st August 2012.

Next steps:

The delivery services to Afghan refugee injecting and non-injecting drug users in Iran and Pakistan and returnees in Afghanistan will be continued into the next year but the focus will be adapted to prioritize drug treatment and rehabilitation services. Expansion of these services to other border locations in the region with vulnerable refugees and migrant populations such as Tajikistan are being explored and assessed and will be implemented in the second half of 2012, subject to funding.

SUB-PROGRAMME 4: TRENDS AND IMPACTS

Sub-Programme 4 on Trends and Impacts is designed to enhance trends analysis and impact monitoring capacity at the regional level, focusing on the 8 countries most immediately affected by the Afghan drug flow dynamics. In the first six months of implementation, UNODC work has focused on preparatory work for the launch of substantive interventions in this area such as through baseline assessments and consultations - most importantly through the Regional Workshop on Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis Capacities in Tashkent on 16-18 July. The first Sub-Programme 4 Task Force meeting also took place at the event and resulted in the consensus identification of priority areas of assistance and support by the Regional Programme for the next year and these are presently being finalized with consultations with partner governments through diplomatic channels. Considerable work has taken place in the area of setting up programme management structures and processes to facilitate programme management and implementation.

Outcome 9: Improved availability and use of counter narcotics law enforcement, criminal justice and drug use information/data

Under Output 9.3, UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch compiled a first Regional Rapid Assessment of trends in drugs and related crimes to serve as a baseline for monitoring and programming. The assessment report takes a snap shot of the region in regards to illicit drug cultivation, markets and counter narcotics, which can be used to monitor the impact of the Regional Programme in coming years.

UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch drafted a summary report of available information and data on the implementation of articles related to international cooperation in criminal matters under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) for the countries of the region and to illustrate some gaps in their implementation. This summary report was used to inform interventions under Sub-Programme 2 and is another example of the integrated nature of work conducted under the Regional Programme.

An assessment of Afghanistan's current capacities to engage effectively in counter narcotics regional cooperation was drafted to orient Afghanistan's expressed aspirations to take on a greater regional coordination role. The international consensus is that a viable and long-term solution has to be based on regional counter-narcotics coordination and cooperation led by Afghanistan. The assessment identifies areas where assistance is necessary and proposes concrete recommendations to help Afghanistan achieve this goal.

On 26 June, and within the context of the UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the UNODC Executive Director launched the 2012 World Drug Report. The UN General Assembly (GA) convened on that UN International Day the thematic debate on "Drugs and Crime as a Threat to Development". The session was attended by the Afghan Minister for Counter Narcotics who addressed the current state drug control in Afghanistan and highlighted progress made and the importance of multilateralism and regional approaches, including in mainstreaming drug control into development initiatives.

Taking the momentum created by the GA thematic debate on the drug's impact on development, the Regional Programme supported the organization of a briefing session on "Counter-Narcotics Regional Cooperation", in New York, on 27 June. The briefing session was part of the overall efforts deployed to intensify support to Afghan and neighboring governments in translating the agreed objectives of the regional cooperation into concrete action. The session was attended by senior officials from the region including the Afghan Minister for Counter Narcotics; the Head of the Tajik Drug Control Agency; the Afghan Foreign Ministry Director General for International Cooperation, senior representatives of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations, UN agencies and the UNODC Executive Director. Capitalizing on the momentum generated by the Kabul Conference on 14 June, discussions focused on concrete ways to further expand regional cooperation (including under the Regional Programme) as well as possibilities to enhance Afghanistan's capacities to engage effectively in the region.

The first Regional Workshop on Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis Capacities was convened in Tashkent on 16-18 July. The meeting was attended by experts from analytical and statistical units of drug control agencies and relevant ministries in charge of data collection related to drug demand and supply. The workshop provided an opportunity for the Regional Programme countries to

share experiences on the collection and analysis of data related to illicit drugs and to present international standards and best practices.

Taking into account the relevance of the above regional workshop, and at its margins, the Sub-Programme 4 Task Force meeting was convened as well that resulted in the consensus identification of priority areas of assistance and support by the Regional Programme for 2013. Follow-up consultations for its finalization are in process. The workshop led to the establishment of the Sub-Programme 4 Expert Group, which will be responsible for coordinating and prioritizing research work in the region.

Next steps:

An assessment of national capacities and practices for statistical data collection, management and analysis in order to orient and prioritize supporting assistance and efforts will be undertaken by UNODC in close consultation with the countries falling under the Regional Programme. A regional database for sharing of drug-related information will be facilitated by UNODC taking advantage and building upon existing mechanisms like the recently developed online database presented to the Tashkent meeting. Active efforts will be made to coordinate the work of the Sub-Programme 4 Expert Group along with activities carried out under CARICC and JPC. Furthermore, subject to funding, specialized research looking into specific areas of drugs related regional trends will be conducted – with areas of focus including analysis of vulnerable and marginalized socio-economic groups (including women and children), and illegal economy of drugs, among others.

Outcome 10: Enhanced understanding in the region of the linkages between narcotics and socioeconomic development

A concept paper for a joint study with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to assess the extent and scale of the macroeconomic impact of the drug trade in Afghanistan and its interconnections with the region has been developed. An earlier attempt to better understand the dynamics of the work in this area was carried out in 2006 and the drug trade has evolved considerably since then - with this opportunity to build upon the earlier work and provide some solid quantitative analysis, focus on how the licit economy, particularly macroeconomic variables, are influenced by the illicit economy, including post-2014 concerns and opportunities. This will be a significant step forward in the attempt to mainstream counter-narcotics issues into socio-economic development approaches and a unique value-add of the Regional Programme.

Next steps:

Consultations are continuing with the World Bank and the IMF on the nature of the collaboration and if agreement is reached, work should commence in the coming months on this joint study. In addition, at the start of the next year, a regional alternative livelihoods forum will be convened to promote related socio-economic development with a view to developing a pilot assistance project.

Outcome 11: Effective programme monitoring and reporting

Regional Programme performance indicators were developed with UNODC expert inputs. Workplans and logframes (including assumptions and risks) were developed and are monitored regularly for each Sub-Programme of the Regional Programme. These form the basis of the Regional Programme Portal and progress is updated and reviewed on a regular basis.

An internal web-based project management tool was developed in order to establish an effective working monitoring and reporting mechanism across the geographically dispersed Regional Programme team. The Regional Programme Portal monitors activities and tasks in the achievements of outputs and outcomes and supports evaluation needs and establishes linkages between the Regional Programme and country programmes and projects. This information management and activities tracking system manages implementation, produces internal reports, and provides for the sharing information. This is the key tool used by Sub-Programme coordinators as well as the Regional Programme core team to channel activity information and lessen email communication load.

The first programme management workshop was organized in Kabul between 22 and 24 May. Participants from the UNODC network of field offices directly involved with Regional Programme development and implementation, as well as Headquarters, discussed programme management structures and processes as well as ways of working more effectively together in a geographically dispersed team. The workshop concluded with greater clarity on roles and responsibilities, key responsibilities and milestone timelines.

A programme implementation strategy was drafted clarifying roles and responsibilities, workflows, financial management, monitoring and reporting and advocacy. The purpose of the programme implementation strategy is to guide and orient discussion on programme management by clarifying the work processes to enable collective attainment of the overall objectives of the Regional Programme, and present the drivers of change and introduce a plan of action for Regional Programme implementation in 2012.

The programme management structures are defined to allow the Regional Programme team to deliver the 2012 strategic priorities, which have been agreed upon with the Governmental authorities encompassed under the Regional Programme, following the Steering Committee meeting in Vienna on 14 March 2012. The Regional Programme annual report (Output 11.2) will be drafted in the fourth quarter of 2012.

UNODC fielded, from 11 January till 10 February 2012, an Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) mission to the region (the first of its kind) in order to ensure effective synchronization and results-based management of the Regional Programme. It resulted in an “Evaluability and Results Orientation Study”, which helps ensure the appropriateness of the Regional Programme’s (i) logical framework, (ii) monitoring system, (iii) results framework, (iv) reporting framework, and (v) evaluation needs. The Regional Programme design has been adjusted through the Sub-Programme Logical Framework (with the support of the IEU) in line with these findings.

Next steps:

Lessons learnt from Regional Programme implementation are regularly assessed and adapted to improve programme management structure and practices. Such dynamic approach is necessary to fulfill the corporate directive to pursue delivery and accountability in the work of UNODC. The versatility of the Regional Programme in identifying activities to promote the defined outcomes and outputs has been instrumental in delivering cost-effective technical assistance adapting to developments in politically fast-paced environment.

All Sub-Programmes (RERV08, RERV09, RERV10) of the Regional Programme will be evaluated as part of the Regional Programme In-depth Evaluation, which will be undertaken as a midterm as well as final evaluation to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Regional Programme and to identify lessons to be learned. The mid-term evaluation is scheduled for June 2013.

Drafted by the UNODC Regional Programme Management Team
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