

UNODC helps countries and its people to reduce illegal drugs and crime throughout the world and to address justice and human security. It helps Member States with technical assistance, legal advice and research within the framework of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the three United Nations Conventions on Drugs.

UNODC South Asia is present in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Maldives: Government enacts new Drugs Act

On 28 December 2011, a new Drugs Act (17/11) which was under draft since 2009 was presented to the Parliament for debate and ratified by the President of Maldives on 31 December 2011. Addressing substance abuse was identified as one of the five key campaign pledges when the new government came into power in 2008 and amending the then existing drug Law 17/77 became a priority. Multiple stakeholders including relevant government agencies, civil society working in the area of demand reduction and UNODC were consulted while drafting the new law.

The highlight of the new Drugs Act is that it makes a clear distinction between drug users, peddlers and traffickers. While it continues to enforce tough penalties for drug dealing, trafficking and smuggling, it focuses on strengthening treatment and rehabilitation opportunities for drug users. There are separate provisions to address the needs of vulnerable sub-populations such as minors and women. Establishment of drug courts is another feature of the Act.

In line with the Act, a National Drug Control Council (NDCC) comprising ministerial level representatives and chaired by the Vice President was set up on 11 January 2012, which will play an advisory role to the President in drug control issues. A National Drug Agency (NDA) mandated to establish drug treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services is also being set up. UNODC is currently assisting the Government to translate the Act from Divehi to English, with support from the European Union.



India: Government advisory addressing cyber crime against children



The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India recently issued an advisory on 'Preventing and Combating Cyber Crime against Children', which has been circulated to all 28 State Governments and 7 Union Territories for respective information, reference and action.

In 2011, in preparation for the Crime Commission, which is one of UNODC's governing bodies, UNODC assisted the Ministry to organize a consultative meeting with different stakeholders to discuss and develop solutions to prevent and control cybercrime against children (Eg - abuse of the internet for child pornography, cyber-bullying etc). Thereafter, several consultative meetings were held with governmental and non-governmental partners to discuss further action. As a first step, the above mentioned advisory was formulated informing State Governments and Union Territories about necessary action that should be taken in line with existing legislation as well as advising on possible preventive action. The advisory can be found at: <http://mha.nic.in/pdfs/CS-Adv-160112.pdf>

Upcoming Events

India: 3 February, Kapurthala (Punjab) - Launch of the Methadone Maintenance Programme (MMT), a joint initiative of UNODC and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The MMT initiative will be implemented over a period of 12 months in 5 sites in India to develop practice guidelines and procedures for MMT operation and build up the evidence base for feasibility of MMT in India through institutional settings.

Delhi (8 -12 February) and Guwahati (14 - 18 February)

UNODC, in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences, will be organizing training of trainer workshops to enhance the capacities of counsellor training institutes to undertake capacity building and counselling supervision for counsellors under the National AIDS Control Programme.

Workshops and Trainings in South Asia



Bangladesh: UNODC along with its NGO partner, organized a day long sensitization workshop on 17 and 18 January 2012, on HIV prevention in prisons with prison authorities from the Khulna and Jessore Prisons respectively. About 50 prison staff in each site attended the workshop, which provided an orientation on HIV issues, vulnerability of prisoners to HIV/AIDS,

the importance of services such as voluntary counselling and testing, condom programming, anti retroviral therapy and establishing linkages with community care centers.

India: As one of the lead technical partners for the ongoing Global Fund Round 9 India project on strengthening capacities and improving quality and reach of harm reduction services for Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), UNODC has been developing capacity building material for staff working in NGOs supported under the National AIDS Control Program. Training of Trainer (ToT) workshops are conducted based on the training material, to build a cadre of master trainers for further capacity building of personnel.

From 24 - 28 January 2012, UNODC in collaboration with TTK Hospitals, Chennai, organized a ToT workshop on clinical issues for clinical staff. Trainees included doctors and nurses from eminent hospitals and medical research institutes across the country. From 12 - 16 December 2011, UNODC held a ToT workshop on program management for program managers working in IDU interventions. Training officers from different State Training Resource Centers and Program Managers from various NGOs attended the training.

Bangladesh: UNODC initiates situational assessment of HIV in six prison sites



Since January 2012, UNODC has initiated a situational assessment of six prison sites in Bangladesh (Kashimpur-2, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Comilla, Chittagong, and Sylhet Central Jails) in order to assess HIV vulnerabilities among the prison population in general (pre-trial and convicted prisoners)

and particularly among sub-groups such as women and drug users.

The assessment will review the existing prison conditions and associated infrastructure along with national policies and legal frameworks to identify feasible and appropriate opportunities to initiate the comprehensive package of services for HIV prevention, treatment and care in prisons.

Under this initiative, UNODC's survey partner Business and Welfare Initiative Limited (BWIL) organized a training from 7 - 9 January in Dhaka where 13 data collectors and supervisors received training about survey methodologies, tools and data collection techniques. After the training, the survey team will carry out the field research and present the findings. The report is expected to be ready by April 2012.

UNODC INTERNAL NEWS CORNER

Our Office bids farewell to our colleague, Shova Maharjan



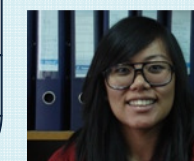
Shova was the first person to start UNODC's office in Nepal in 2007! She was key to laying the ground for UNODC's work on HIV prevention in Nepal, building and sustaining networks with partners. She now joins UNICEF in Nepal. We thank Shova for her dedicated service and wish her all the best for her new assignment and life!

We welcome on board our new colleague, G K Goswami



Goswami has joined UNODC as Project Officer in our Delhi Office. He is from the Indian Police Service with extensive field experience in several of UNODC's mandate areas. He will provide technical guidance and policy advice for implementing activities under the regional project on strengthening drug law enforcement capacities in South Asia.

We also welcome Sarah Wanglat who is interning with us in New Delhi.



Sarah is pursuing a Masters in Law specialising in human rights at the National Law School of India, Bangalore. She is assisting the Office with work related to anti human trafficking.