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UNODC Executive Director meets Viet Nam Deputy PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc

Offers continued assistance to Government plan to reduce number of compulsory detention centres for drug users

Hanoi (Viet Nam), 4 December 2012 – In his first ever official visit to Viet Nam, Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), met today with Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and Chairman of the National Committee on AIDS, Drugs and Prostitution Control.

Mr. Fedotov noted the country's progress in economic and social spheres and commended the Government on its adoption of amendments to the Law on Handling Administrative Violations and its strong commitment to closing compulsory treatment centers. The Executive Director also praised the recent approval of the National Strategy on HIV and programmes pertaining to drug control and crime prevention. Mr. Fedotov stated his belief that these changes will provide a clear pathway forward in the future.

"We are encouraged by the degree of progress made by the Government of Viet Nam in the past few months as it moves to embrace community-based treatment to a greater degree," said Mr. Fedotov. "UNODC offers its continued support and technical assistance and expertise in the Government of Viet Nam's efforts," he added.

Mr. Fedotov also recognized Viet Nam's recent ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its work to implement the UN Conventions that it ratified some time ago – those on anti-corruption (in 2009) and on drug control (in 1997).

Mr. Fedotov welcomed both the growing role of Viet Nam in the region and its improved efforts to contain the trafficking of drugs in the Greater Mekong. "We need to build a partnership in the region to support Myanmar," said Mr. Fedotov, referring to his recent exchanges, while in Myanmar, with that country's leadership. Myanmar is the source of most of the heroin and methamphetamines consumed in Southeast Asia and has requested UNODC support to help counter this trend.

During his visit, Mr. Fedotov also met with a number of other key cabinet members. Issues discussed included drug control and organized crime.

"Human security is threatened wherever organized criminal groups emerge and the rule of law is challenged. These transnational organized criminal syndicates – who trade in illicit drugs, human beings, counterfeit products, fake medicines, protected natural resources like timber,



fish and other wildlife, and goods that harm the environment – are a threat to public health and society’s well-being. Let’s put them out of business!” said Mr. Fedotov.

Part of the One UN Plan for Viet Nam, the UNODC country programme in Viet Nam focuses on HIV prevention, care, treatment and support in prisons including pre-trial detention centres; supporting the strengthening drug law enforcement agency information collection and sharing procedures; improving criminal justice responses to human trafficking and migrant smuggling through enhanced border control capacities and international cooperation; providing policy advice and technical support to the government; and providing support for effective amphetamine-type stimulant (ATS) prevention strategies.

Viet Nam is the third country in Southeast Asia to be visited by Mr. Fedotov – after Thailand and Myanmar – as part of an extensive five-country, 12-day mission. Mr. Fedotov travels next to Lao PDR before concluding his mission in Indonesia where he will engage both with government counterparts and ASEAN leadership.

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