

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2016, 010:00 AM (BANGKOK- ICT)

UNODC: Release of 2016 World Drug Report indicates rising use of drugs by adults and fatal overdoses globally, along with continued drug challenges in Southeast Asia

Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar) 26 June 2016 – According to the latest [World Drug Report](#), five per cent of the adult population, or nearly 250 million people between the ages of 15 and 64, used at least one drug in 2014. Although substantial, this figure has not grown over the past four years in proportion to the global population. The report, however, suggests that the number of people classified as suffering from drug user disorders has increased disproportionately for the first time in six years. There are now over 29 million people within this category (compared to the previous figure of 27 million). Additionally, around 12 million people inject drugs with 14 per cent of these living with HIV. The overall impact of drug use in terms of health consequences continues to be devastating.

Released each year as a culmination of the data gathered by the UNODC, the Report provides a global overview of the latest developments of the use of narcotics and illicit trafficking, including the use of opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, and addresses the use of precursor chemicals to manufacture illicit drugs. The Report focuses on the health impact of narcotics on users globally, as well as sustainable development alternatives to the trafficking and cultivation of drugs on an international and regional scale.

In East and Southeast Asia, opiates and synthetic drugs, in particular methamphetamine, continue to dominate illicit drug markets. Areas under opium poppy cultivation in the Golden Triangle were estimated at nearly 62,000 ha, accounting for 22 per cent of the global total. Substantial quantities of heroin produced in the Golden Triangle feed the heroin markets within the region as well as increasingly Oceania.

Global seizures of synthetic drugs have risen more than seven-fold since 1998. This steep surge has been largely driven by East and Southeast Asia, which has one of the largest and rapidly growing methamphetamine markets in the world. However, it appears that drug treatment systems in the region still lack the capacity to cope with the increasing number of methamphetamine users. The number of people undergoing treatment for the use of synthetic drugs has been increasing in Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia, with half of those treated for opioids use in the region.

In addition, although the prevalence of injecting drugs in East and Southeast Asia below the global average, a large number of people who inject drugs (PWID) - 27 per cent of the total number of PWID in the world - reside in the region, given that it is the most populated region in the world. This year's World Drug Report reaffirms that the countries within the region face unprecedented challenges overcoming problems caused by illicit drug production, trafficking, and use.

This report comes soon after April's UN General Assembly special session on the world drug problem (UNGASS), a landmark moment in global drug policy which resulted in a series of concrete operational recommendations. Collectively, these look to promote long-term, sustainable, development-oriented

and balanced drug control policies and programmes. UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific will continue to support countries in the region to develop more balanced drug policies to meet the commitments of the global community made at the UNGASS.

BACKGROUND: The UNODC World Drug Report is an annual publication that provides an overview of the world's drug situation in terms of illicit cultivation, production, trafficking, and abuse with the latest data available. The source of the data is mainly from the Annual Reports Questionnaire system used by most governments and coordinated by UNODC. The World Drug Report is launched annually on 26 June to mark World Drug Day.

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