

UNODC supports a campaign on World Drug Day against drug use among students in Mozambique



Drug use among vulnerable youth remains a concern in Mozambique, with devastating impacts on individuals and communities.

“Criminals are profiting from people’s misery, with cocaine production at record levels, and a five-fold increase in methamphetamine seizures and an almost quadrupling of amphetamine seizures in the last decade”, said Mr. Marco Teixeira, Head of the UNODC Mozambique Office on the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (‘World Drug Day’), commemorated on 26 June.

As every year, UNODC commemorated World Drug Day in coordination with the Mozambican Central Office for Prevention and Fight Against Drugs (GCPCD) to raise awareness on the challenges that illicit drugs represent for societies.

This year’s theme, “#Care in Crises”, offered an opportunity to reflect on the importance of health in humanitarian crises. This is particularly relevant in the country, which in the past years has been affected by environmental crises, health crises and terrorism.

The commemoration took place at one of the largest schools in Maputo, the Escola Secundaria Francisco Manyanga, which is acknowledged by the community and school authorities for being affected by issues of drug use among adolescents and youth.

In addition to civil society and community-based organizations, the event was attended by high level leaders of the Mozambican Government, including the Minister of Health, the Secretary of State of Maputo City, and the Provincial Director of Health of Maputo City, testifying to a strong commitment by the Mozambican government to address this urgent matter.

In cooperation with UNODC and the GCPCD, the school organized throughout the month of June a series of sport competitions, and other cultural and social activities as a way to promote healthy lifestyles and awareness on the topic. On the World Drug Day event, the winning students were then awarded with gifts, diplomas and trophies for each category of the contests. UNODC also contributed to the campaign with visibility and advertising materials containing messages for youth on risks associated with drug use.

“Educational institutions represent a unique value in stimulating creative and critical thinking, which will certainly consolidate principles and values that can support a better citizenship and society”, emphasized Mr. Teixeira.

According to the UNODC representative, broader efforts to mitigate drug use in the country need to include non-discriminatory policy solutions, centred on people, health and human rights, supported by enhanced international cooperation to stop illicit drug trafficking and hold accountable those who profit from human misery.

Especially in the context of humanitarian crises, the need for collective and evidence-based approaches to achieve a vision of health for all and bridge the gap in access to knowledge and resources that vulnerable populations often encounter is crucial.

UNODC remains committed to work closely with the Mozambican Government and other international partners to advance the fight against drug use and drug trafficking, including by continuing to provide its expertise towards developing strategic plans and deliver training of related personnel in matters of harm reduction caused by the abuse of illicit and licit drugs.