

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

**MESSAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE
AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING
26 June 2010**

As we prepare for this September's United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, we must recognize the major impediment to development posed by drug abuse and illicit trafficking. As this year's theme stresses, it is time to "Think Health, Not Drugs".

Drug abuse poses significant health challenges. Injecting drug use is a leading cause of the spread of HIV. In some parts of the world, heroin use and HIV have reached epidemic proportions. Drug control – including prevention and measures to reduce the harmful effects of drug use – is therefore an important part of the battle to combat HIV/AIDS.

Drugs are a threat to the environment. Coca cultivation destroys vast swathes of Andean rain forest – the lungs of our planet – as well as national parks. Chemicals used to make cocaine poison local streams.

The illicit drug trade also undermines governance, institutions and societal cohesion. Drug traffickers typically seek routes where the rule of law is weak. In turn, drug-related crime deepens vulnerability to instability and poverty.

To break this vicious circle, it is essential to promote development in drug-growing regions. Our work to achieve the MDGs and fight drugs must go hand-in-hand. In seeking to eradicate illicit crops, we must also work to wipe out poverty.

Recent worrying trends – in parts of West Africa and Central America – show how drug trafficking can threaten the security, and even the sovereignty, of states. That is why the United Nations is putting a stronger emphasis on enhancing justice and fighting crime in peace-building and peace-keeping operations.

National governments must also do their part. I urge all states to become parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. I also call on states to live up to their commitments, as Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption, to strengthen integrity and reduce the corruption that facilitates the drug trade.

On this International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, let us reaffirm our commitment to this shared responsibility within our communities, and among the family of nations.