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Office of the Resident Coordinator in Serbia & Montenegro

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

26th JUNE 2003

MARKING THE DAY IN BELGRADE, SCG

Background

This year's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is dedicated to the theme 'Let's talk about drugs', summing up the best starting point for tackling any problem: recognising that it exists and speaking openly about it. An estimated 4.7% of the global population aged over 14 use illicit drugs. As alarming as the figures are, the effects of drug abuse go far beyond the individuals concerned and cause incalculable harm to society in health, social and economic terms – including the spread of HIV.

The Day

'Let's talk about drugs' underlines the need for children, families, peers, teachers and communities to talk about drug abuse, admit it as a problem, and take responsibility for doing something about it. Drug abuse is often a result of underlying problems or a symptom of a broader malaise. It is therefore important to talk openly about addressing the potential causes, and not just the abuse in isolation.

The Event

In Serbia & Montenegro (SCG), the UN Office for Drugs Control (UNODC) and **local NGO Anti-Drugs Association (ADA)**¹ have joined forces with the Office of the Resident Coordinator (ORC) to mobilise forces to raise awareness of drug abuse. **ADA will advocate using its field-based operation in seven locations across the country** and the UN will work in Belgrade. The venue in Belgrade will be the Youth Centre in Zemun for Roma (Prinzrenska 37). The Centre is active in supporting young Roma in after school activities such as sport and arts and crafts.

The Belgrade event will bring together around 20 teenagers (10 Roma youth who have previously had drug-dependency problems and 10 young people from the new private school Milos Crnjanski) at a Roma Youth Centre in Zemun to "talk about drugs" with a well-known personality (actor Mr. Nikola Djuričko) who is a role model for young people. The Pink TV show hosted by Ivana Bojić will cover the discussion (show to be aired on the following Saturday). Mrs Marović, the wife of the President will pre-record, since she will not be in Belgrade on the Day, the UN Secretary-General's Message which will be shown on various TV news programmes on the Day. Basketballer Vlade Divac and waterpolo star Aleksandr Sapić are supporting the Day by pre-recording interviews and soundbites for radio and TV to be aired during the week of Anti-Drugs Day. T-shirts, baseball caps and balloons with the Day's logo are being produced. The discussion by young people will be facilitated

¹ UNODC have developed an on-going partnership with ADA, recognized as one of the leading anti-drug NGO in Serbia.

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and led by Dr Dragan Ilić, Head of the Serbian Ministry of Health's Task Force on Youth Health Issues, and will last no more than 1 hour. Other media are being invited to the press conference which will immediately follow the discussion. Dr Ilić, **ADA Director Bojan Ilić (no relation) alongside the UN Resident Coordinator** and the Youth Centre Director Milica Stanić. To the Day have been invited representatives of the the Serbian Ministries of Health, Youth& Sports, and Interior. UNICEF and WHO (World Health Organisation) have been consulted and provided useful suggestions. UNODC posters will be used for promotional purposes.

Supporting anti-drugs measures are particularly important to the work of the United Nations especially as Millennium Development Goal 6 (combating HIV/AIDS) should be achieved in SCG by 2015 (see www.undp.org/mdg). The Millennium Declaration Roadmap (see <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/56/a56326.pdf>), paras. 23-26, commits to the GOAL: To redouble our efforts to implement our commitment to counter the world drug problem.

Outside of Belgrade, the ADA will seek to copy, on a smaller scale, activities in the capital, and will launch their new website at www.stopdrogama.org . They will run an anti-drug graffiti competition with schools in Jagodina and Kragujevac and have events in five other locations: Novi Sad, Valjevo, Zajecar, Podgorica and Svilanjac..

The Kit & Logo

UNODC HQ is producing a package which includes a brochure, adhesive sticker, poster, logo slogan and theme for the day. The SG's message will be translated. We have the logo on CD.

Web-site

More information can be found on the web site at www.unodc.org

Sound bites

UNODC have prepared a number of 15-30 second radio scripts to be recorded and broadcasted by several, SCG radio stations where celebrities, famous and well-known among young people, athletes, singers, actors deliver different messages and talk openly about drugs, breaking the silence, stigma and exclusion that surround people who are drug dependent, and that only make the problem worse. UNODC has also lined up Serbian speakers from their HQ.

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ANNEX 1

EMBARGOED UNTIL 26 JUNE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE
AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING
26 June 2003

The theme for this year's International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, "Let's talk about drugs", sums up the best starting point for tackling any problem: recognizing that it exists and speaking openly about it. An estimated 200 million people worldwide use illicit drugs. That translates into 4.7 per cent of the global population aged over 14. Those figures are alarming enough in themselves. But the effects of drug abuse go far beyond the individuals concerned and cause incalculable harm to society in health, social and economic terms -- including the spread of HIV.

"Let's talk about drugs" underlines the need for children, families, peers, teachers and communities to talk about drug abuse, admit that it is a problem, and take responsibility for doing something about it. The support of caring and listening parents has proven to be one of the most important protective factors against drug abuse. But for the many young people around the world who do not have the advantage of a supportive home environment, we all have a special responsibility.

Drug abuse is often a result of underlying problems or a symptom of a broader malaise. It is therefore important to talk about addressing the potential causes, and not just the abuse in isolation. Talking about drugs is the only way to break the silence, stigma and exclusion that surround people who are drug-dependent, and that only make the problem worse. Talking openly is also essential if we are to tackle the problem early and avoid it becoming a chronic condition.

Today's International Day Against Drug Abuse is a reminder to all of us to play our part. The United Nations is here to assist you in this fight. The drug programme of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime has a vast amount of useful information available at www.unodc.org to help us all talk about drugs.

Kofi A. Annan