

UNODC IN SOUTH ASIA: UNODC helps countries and its people to reduce illegal drugs and crime throughout the world and address justice and human security issues. It helps Member States with technical assistance, legal advice and research within the framework of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the three United Nations conventions on drugs.

UNODC South Asia is present in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka

Maldives: Government and UNODC sign new technical cooperation project

Maldives is experiencing a growing drug problem among its youth. According to health professionals and available reports, more than half of the young living in the Maldives, are turning to drugs. As per anecdotal evidences available, there are approximately 30,000 drug users in the Maldives. Also, young drug users are switching from smoking to injecting drugs which could fuel a rise in HIV and AIDS in the Maldives, where cases have remained historically low. Additionally, the prison authorities in the Maldives report that over 80 percent of the prison inmates require drug treatment.

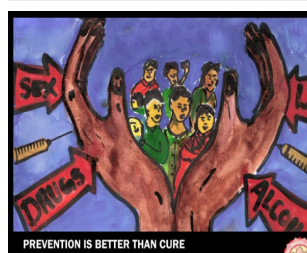
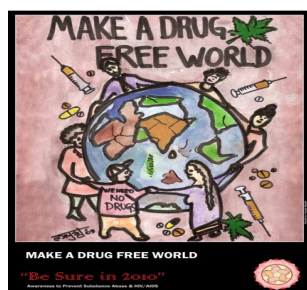
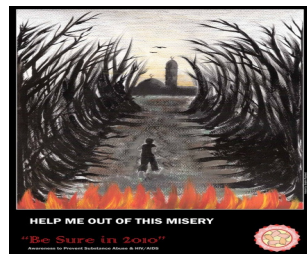
To effectively deal with drug use, UNODC signed with the Government of Maldives, its first ever country-specific technical cooperation project, called "Strengthening the national response to combat drug abuse in the Maldives", funded mainly by the European Union. The signing ceremony took place on 19 January 2010 at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Government of Maldives, where Mr. Ali Hashim, Minister of Finance and Treasury, Mr. Abdul Bari Abdulla, Minister of State for Health and Family, Government of Maldives, and Ms. Cristina Albertin, UNODC Representative for South Asia signed the project document. The project will provide technical assistance to strengthen the national response on drug use prevention and treatment through a series of capacity-building measures both with the Government and the civil society in the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. UNODC looks forward to this new cooperation project in support of the Maldivian society.



From left to right: Mr. Abdul Bari Abdulla, Minister of State for Health and Family, Government of Maldives, Mr. Guy Platten, Head of Finance and Contracts - Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Mr. Ali Hashim, Minister of Finance and Treasury, Government of Maldives and Cristina Albertin UNODC South Asia Representative

Maldives: Drug users speak through art

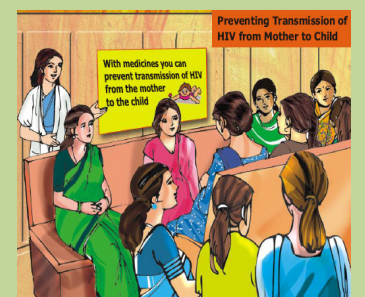
Many youngsters in the Maldives, who use drugs, are serving sentences behind bars and in correction facilities. The Society for Women Against Drugs (SWAD), a local organization based in Male', held recently an art competition for drug users to raise awareness on prevention of drug use and HIV with the theme 'be sure in 2010'. This is the first art competition in the country for drug users. A panel of three artists judged the paintings based on slogans, visuals and overall impact. The awarding ceremony was held at the Drug Rehabilitation Centre and Asseyri Jail, Government of Maldives. The State Minister of Home Affairs Mr. Ahmed Adil was the chief guest. SWAD selected the best ten drawings which were also used as awareness raising materials. UNODC supported this initiative.



India: First ever Diploma on Anti Human Trafficking

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), in New Delhi, India will be launching a **Diploma in Anti Human Trafficking** in 2010. The School of Law of IGNOU has taken up the initiative and has set up an Expert Panel of advisors to help draft the curriculum. UNODC has been invited to be a member of this panel in its role as a technical expert. The course will be available in English and later in Hindi, India's national language as well as in other vernacular languages. This diploma will be multi-disciplinary and rights based in nature including topics like counseling, rehabilitation and rescue. The UN Conventions, especially the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols will be incorporated in the curriculum.

Sri Lanka: Positive living flip chart in Sinhalese



The UNODC-supported flip chart on "Issues related to HIV and drug use with a focus on women and children" is now available in Sri Lanka's national language, *Sinhalese*. The eight page flip chart with animation was developed as a training tool for community sessions on prevention of HIV and drug use. The document was field tested in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

India: Presentation of UNODC's computer-based training for drug law enforcement to the Government of India

The UNODC regional project on 'Strengthening drug law enforcement capacities in South Asia' envisages the development and implementation of an e-learning tool for drug law enforcement officials across the region. Building on the UNODC-developed computer based training (CBT) course for drug law enforcement, the project organized a mission for Mr. Varat Phongthirasawan, a UNODC Information Technology expert for Computer-Based Training (CBT) at the UNODC Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok to showcase and provide an introduction to the course to Indian Government officials, especially of the National Academy of Customs Excise and Narcotics, the Narcotics Control Bureau and the Central Bureau of Narcotics, who are UNODC's counterpart agencies in the project. There was a broad acknowledgement of the usefulness and applicability of this comprehensive 100 hours long training tool for India. As a next step, the Government and UNODC will assess the next measures that are required to put this tool into practice.

The CBT on drug law enforcement is developed by UNODC and was initiated in 1997. Today it is being implemented in 300 training centres in 52 countries worldwide.

UNODC INTERNAL NEWS CORNER

South Asia: UNODC launched its new South Asia website!

On 1 February 2010, UNODC launched its new website at its main office in New Delhi, India. The office invited several experts and partners, working with UNODC for its common cause for more development options, for justice and human security for the people in South Asia. Since electronic information media drives today's societies, the office revamped its web site with a view to convey and illustrate more on the human face of its work. The new website does not only provide essential information on UNODC's mandate and work in the subregion, but places important emphasis on the stories of people who work towards a more healthy life and society without drugs and crimes.

South Asia: UNODC welcomes new members to its team

UNODC welcomes Mr. Gunashekar, the new HIV Regional Advisor and Ms. Latha Mani, the new project coordinator for the UNODC project in the North East of India. Gunashekar joined UNODC in 2006 and has been previously working on prevention of HIV in prisons, anti-human trafficking, victim support and child protection in India. In her new capacity, Latha Mani is responsible for the UNODC part of the HIV and AIDS joint UN programme in the four states of the North East of India: Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Meghalaya.

