

UNODC IN SOUTH ASIA: UNODC helps countries and its people to reduce illegal drugs and crime throughout the world and to address justice and human security. 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

India: Delegation from Afghanistan visits intervention sites to learn about HIV prevention



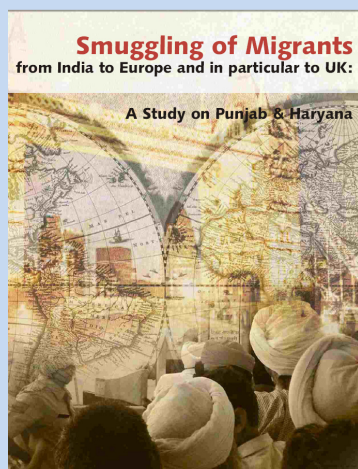
National AIDS Control Programme, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), religious leaders of the community and the Director of Women Affairs of a Province, visited New Delhi, India from 18 March to 22 March 2010.

There are nearly one million drug users in Afghanistan representing 4 per cent of the total population. An estimated 14 per cent of heroin users are injecting drug users. The wide availability of opiates, unsafe injecting practices, low awareness on HIV and AIDS and commercial sex work are risks in the spreading of HIV and AIDS epidemic in Afghanistan. To learn how to address these issues, a delegation of nine Government officials from Afghanistan comprising of doctors, psychiatrists and officers working for the

UNODC arranged a busy schedule for the delegates, who familiarized themselves with various Government of India - supported HIV prevention activities in the capital, New Delhi. The delegation also toured care centres set up around the city: (i) the oral substitution treatment drop-in-centre which caters to the health needs of poor drug users (ii) the Navjyoti India Foundation that rehabilitates drug users through homeopathy and counseling and (iii) the Government of India - supported organizations in the red light district, which train female sex workers into peer educators to spread messages on prevention of HIV among sex workers and their clients.

Dr. M. Tahir Kazim, Monitoring and Implementation Expert, National AIDS Control Programme, Government of Afghanistan, shares, "the site visits were a great learning opportunity for us. We interacted with the clients and health practitioners in their environment. We understood the practices that work and that can be replicated. We take back learnings that will help in identifying target interventions for community based initiatives, implementation and capacity building strategies to prevent drug use and HIV in Afghanistan. This was one of our most successful missions!"

India: Launch of the study on smuggling of migrants in Punjab



UNODC assists Member States in implementing the provisions of the *United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime* and its specific protocol on migrant smuggling, to develop effective criminal justice responses and address smuggling cases. In view of this, the UNODC Regional Office for South Asia, commissioned a study on 'Smuggling of migrants from Punjab/Haryana in India to Europe, particularly the UK' in collaboration with the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi and Heal Society, Chandigarh. The Chief Secretary, Government of Punjab launched the study at the UNODC-organized workshop in Chandigarh. The Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, the Principal Secretary, Home Affairs and Justice, Government of India and the Government of Haryana also participated along with law enforcement agencies, Representatives from the missions of the European Union in India and civil society organizations.

Key Recommendations of the workshop:

- Increase awareness raising activities among law enforcement agencies, general public including school children
- Support capacity building of law enforcement officials to handle cases on irregular migration
- Setting up of Migration Resource Centers and institutionalizing Overseas Employment Facilitation centres

FACT FILE: findings of the study

- Every year more than 20,000 youths from Punjab, India attempt irregular migration
- Out of the total cases related to irregular migration, an average of 47 % seek to reach destination countries in Europe
- Agents charge more than US\$ 50,000 for USA and Canada; from US\$ 15,000 to US\$ 30,000 for countries in Europe and from US\$ 22,500 to US\$ 30,000 for UK
- Migrants often stay indebted for long periods of time unable to pay back high-interest loans and hefty fees that agents demand

Maldives: Donors pledge firm support to Government

The 2008 democratically-elected Maldivian Government held an international donors meeting at Bandos Island, Maldives from 28 to 29 March 2010 to present its key policy challenges and funding needs for the next years to the international community. More than 40 delegations from Asia and the

Pacific, Europe, Middle East and the US as well as from international financial organizations attended the World Bank-hosted and UN-supported event. The United Nations system was present with many agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNODC, UNFPA, ILO, FAO and UNOPS. Also, the civil society participated. Over two days, the Government provided an in-depth insight into the five key challenges that the Maldivian Government is facing: macro economic reform, public sector reform, good governance, social development and climate change. Especially the last one is dear to the heart of the people of Maldives, being a country consisting of more than 1,200 islands lying at sea level in the Indian Ocean. The international community pledged support in the amount of US\$ 313 million, which is an overwhelming success. More than that, all delegations acknowledged the honest openness with which the Government shared the variety of problems that the young democracy is facing.



UNODC INTERNAL NEWS CORNER



UNODC welcomes Ms. Suruchi Pant as the new Deputy Representative. In her new capacity, Suruchi sees her role as crucial in relation to programme development as well as increasing the visibility of UNODC's work.

She shares, "the challenge lies in strengthening programmes, increasing interest by Governments and donors in the region and exploring new interventions and cooperation under UNODC mandates. I will rely on my eight years of professional experience with UNODC South Asia, where I worked as a project coordinator managing projects on prevention of drugs and crime."

UNODC is also happy to welcome Ms. Anja Ruhland from Germany, who has joined the office as an intern for the HIV prevention project in SAARC countries.

