



UNITED NATIONS  
*Office on Drugs and Crime*

## **Operational priorities: guidelines for the medium term**

20 January 2003 (final)



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Last year, 2002, was both troubled and eventful, creating the conditions for the relaunching (and, symptomatically, the renaming) of the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime*.

In May, following the change of management, Member States and staff welcomed an urgent plan of action to improve (a) governance, (b) funding, (c) operations, (d) staff-management relations, and (e) communication. A strong logic binds these elements together, as each is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for success. Good governance and clear priorities enhance credibility and attract funding; transparent rules and predictable resources reward and motivate staff. The quality of their work proves that it makes good sense to invest time and resources in the Office.

At the heart of the action plan was an exercise that took half a year of analysis and consultation to complete: the definition of the Office's operational priorities for the medium term. A paper was presented to Member States on 17 December 2002. The comments made at that meeting have been incorporated into this document, which is the final version.

This year the Office will be reorganized to enable it to pursue these priorities fully and rapidly. Administrative costs will be reduced, with funds and staff redeployed, especially to field operations. Efforts to design new, more imaginative projects and deliver good value for money should go hand in hand with the avoidance by Member States of unnecessarily strict earmarking of the resources they contribute voluntarily.

As drugs, crime and terrorism interconnect across political and cultural borders, the Office needs to have the intellectual strength to dissect, comprehend and tackle these manifestations of uncivil behaviour, both in isolation and in their cruel interaction. The leveraging of resources will be easier the more realistic the priorities and the greater the support from Member States. We need to be able to count on one another.

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## Summary

The mandate of the *Office on Drugs and Crime* (formerly known as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention) derives from several conventions and General Assembly resolutions. The *Office's* technical cooperation programme aims to help improve the capacity of Governments to execute those international commitments.

More recently, the General Assembly special session on drugs (1998), the Millennium Declaration, the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the ongoing negotiation of a Convention against Corruption have given new impetus to the work of the *Office*. At the same time, "uncivil" behaviour has spread in scope, depth and breadth, with drug trafficking, organized crime and international terrorism becoming more violent and more difficult to combat.

The present operational priorities: guidelines for the medium term have been established in order to demonstrate and activate the *Office's* commitment to fulfil its mandate in an efficient, coherent and credible manner.

A first draft of the operational priorities was proposed by an internal task force, which considered the *Office's* past operations and debated how to reinvigorate them. Consultations were held in-house and externally: nearly every colleague was reached, including those in field offices. The advice of Member States, sought both in Vienna and during missions to capitals, was brought to bear prominently. The views of civil society organizations were also tapped. In early October 2002 the draft was discussed during a retreat of the Executive Committee, the *Office's* most senior management body. In early November the *Office's* field representatives assembled in Vienna to consider the text, together with the ways and the means of implementation. Those consultations offered an opportunity to exchange frank opinions, trigger open debate and foster team spirit, but within and outside the *Office*.

Practical considerations have also played a role in promoting the exercise. Since its inception, the *Office's* mandate has covered a broad range of themes, although available resources did not permit it to act prominently in all areas at any one time. Clearer operational guidelines are needed to prioritize action, in compliance with the guidance from governing bodies, and on the basis of the *Office's* demonstrated skills and comparative advantage.

The present **Operational Priorities** should be interpreted flexibly, as **Guidelines for the Medium Term**. Their relative importance varies according to stage of development and social needs. Achieving the right blend of activities in each country is a crucial task that requires management vision, understanding of needs and appropriate use of means.

In the period ahead the *Office* is committed:

- (a) To pursue an integrated approach to drug and crime issues;
- (b) To place drug and crime issues in the context of sustainable development;
- (c) To balance prevention and enforcement activities;
- (d) To select operations on the basis of knowledge and strategic vision;
- (e) To help establish institutions that promote international best practices;
- (f) To leverage resources to exploit the power of partnership.

Clarity as to priorities is not sufficient. Their context also needs to be fortified:

(a) A number of *guiding principles* will keep operations focused. Firstly, operations will address especially issues with cross-border implications. Secondly, activities will make use of the unrivalled strength of the United Nations and the multilateral framework it offers for consultations and actions. Thirdly, operations will take into account gender-sensitive issues;

(b) Certain *enabling conditions* need to be satisfied for the effective application of the priorities set. At the top of the list is the requirement for sound, predictable and stable financing. Staff with the appropriate skills are also needed, supported by an efficient management system. Field offices need adequate integration and communication with Vienna;

(c) The *Office* has been working hard to enhance its *accountability*. Credibility and transparency, the essence of improved relations with stakeholders, are also being promoted single-mindedly at the operational level. An independent evaluation function will provide lessons from past projects and guarantee that future operations represent good value for money. At the same time, fairness in the treatment of staff is being enhanced by recent Secretariat reforms (such as the new staff selection system) and by the establishment of an ombudsman function.

The conclusion is straightforward. There has been uneven progress in the fight against uncivil society.

(a) For half a century the world has organized itself to deal with *narcotics*, armed with several conventions, domestic legislation and international law enforcement;

(b) However, progress against *organized crime* has been much slower, as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols has not yet come into effect, national legislations are often ineffective, while cross-border policing is bilateral, rather than multilateral;

(c) Even further behind is *counter-terrorism*: there is no comprehensive convention, national laws are mostly absent and international cooperation has been limited to a few, albeit eye-catching, situations.

These operational priorities are therefore intended to provide a compass to the *Office* so that it can assist Member States to navigate policy and operations through waters that are not well charted, as yet.

## **I. Background**

The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) of the United Nations was set up in 1997, combining the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP) and the International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). It was established by the Secretary-General to enable the Organization to focus and enhance its capacity to address the interrelated issues of drug control, crime prevention and international terrorism in all its forms.

The consolidation of the above entities into a single body proved useful, as track records show. Yet not all synergies have been exploited, while new agendas have surfaced. These triggers for change are worth listing, as they have imparted the momentum to and the reasons for current efforts to recast ODCCP operations.

### **A. Triggers for change**

#### **1. The Secretary-General's Millennium initiative**

The Millennium Declaration made achieving sustainable development an aim of the Organization. Sustainable development has many aspects: (a) it commands that the planet's resources be shared so as to promote human dignity; (b) it requires good stewardship of resources, to pass on to future generations a world better than the one we have inherited; and (c) it entails the enhancement of human security, including a life free from fear of "uncivil" behaviour.

#### **2. The internationalization of "uncivil" behaviour**

Major terrorist attacks have exposed the roots of international violence. At the same time, the globalization of economic activity has created an environment where not only "public goods", but also "public bads", such as crime and drugs, flow unimpeded within and across borders.

#### **3. Catching up with the real world**

Violence, abuse and addiction have gone global. Illicit drugs are now produced and consumed in all parts of the world, overcoming past differences between rich and poor countries. Markets have quickly adapted to new drugs. "Mom and pop shops" are now feeding merchandise and revenue into syndicate networks. Why bother importing narcotics from across hemispheres, if money can be generated in the neighbourhood and moved in nano-time through financial laundromats?

#### **4. New norms in the drug and crime fields**

In the face of the above, the international community has not been idle. In April 2003, on the occasion of the mid-term implementation review of the 1998 General Assembly special session on drugs, Ministers will determine the extent to which the consensus on fighting illicit drugs and related measures has so far brought results.

In the crime field, the expected early entry into force of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, and progress in the negotiation of a convention against corruption are adding yet more building blocks to the normative and operational responsibilities of the United Nations.

In that context, in May 2002, the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention decided to re-examine the nature and the features of its operations in

order to ensure the discharge of its mandates in a proactive rather than a reactive manner. The idea of developing medium-term operational priorities was conceived and work began immediately.

Symbolically, and not only as part of the exercise's choreography, on 1 October 2002, the name of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention was changed to *Office on Drugs and Crime*. The new name is used throughout this paper to overcome arcane acronyms. In the period ahead the *Office* will thus consist of a drug programme (in reference to UNDCP) and a crime programme (in reference to CICP), with funding for both centralized in Vienna.

## **B. Learning from the past**

During the past decade, the *Office* has pursued activities in several thematic areas, some quite specific in nature, others notable for their comprehensive nature:

(a) *Drug programme*

- (i) Prevention and reduction of drug abuse;
- (ii) Promotion of livelihoods based on licit rather than illicit crops;
- (iii) Suppression of illicit drug trafficking;

(b) *Crime programme*

- (i) Crime prevention and criminal justice reform;
- (ii) Action against transnational organized crime;
- (iii) Action against corruption;
- (iv) Action against trafficking in human beings;
- (v) Prevention of terrorism;

(c) *Cross-cutting activities*

- (i) Policy support, advocacy and legislation;
- (ii) Action against money-laundering.

Operations in these areas have been characterized by varying degrees of size, complexity and relevance. Large-scale operations have coexisted with much smaller projects, at times so micro as to be uneconomical in scale. Some operations have combined both drugs and crime, while others have been so specialized as to disregard the widely varied nature of uncivil behaviour. Some projects have provided concrete operational support to Governments; other projects have mostly funded consultant missions, meetings and travel.

The complexity of planning for operations has been exacerbated by uncertainty over funding. The resources available (about \$100 million per year and about 400 staff) have been modest both in terms of the magnitude of the problems and of the significance of the mandate (see charts I and II). In general, resources have amounted to no more than a fraction of the amounts allocated by individual Governments to the same issues. Furthermore, in late 2001, the exhaustion of the drug programme's financial reserve removed a crucial shield against seasonal variations in delivered resources, the scope of their utilization having been further reduced by the more stringent conditions being attached to them ("earmarking"). This narrowing of the *Office's* resource base makes it imperative to calibrate

spending even more tightly and to establish even stricter criteria for project selection.

## **C. Strengths and weaknesses**

Prior to embarking on the exercise of establishing new operational priorities, the *Office* consulted a broad range of in-house and external stakeholders. Several hundred counterparts were approached with a set of questions concerning the past and evaluation thereof. The resulting balance sheet of what the *Office* had actually delivered in previous years includes elements of both comfort and concern.

### **1. Elements of strength**

- (a) Drug and crime issues are high on domestic and global agendas;
- (b) The *Office's* strong, focused mandate does not overlap with that of others;
- (c) The *Office* is a successful broker for negotiations and cross-border cooperation;
- (d) The *Office* can promote inclusion of drug and crime issues in national policy;
- (e) The experience in drug and crime issues can be extended to counter-terrorism;
- (f) The staff has strong expertise in internationally accepted best practices;
- (g) The *Office's* field office network has proven capacity for TC projects.

### **2. Elements of weakness**

- (a) The United Nations regular budget only funds a small segment of the mandate;
- (b) The *Office* must rely on contributions from a few donors, fairness is an issue;
- (c) The unstable and unpredictable funding inhibits policy planning;
- (d) Earmarking contributions may be inconsistent with needs and ability to deliver;
- (e) The disparity between the respective budgets of the drug and the crime programmes hampers integration;
- (f) The *Office* has shown an instinct for repressive rather than preventive operations;
- (g) Partnership with like-minded stakeholders has been underemphasized;
- (h) There has been no independent evaluation of operations;
- (i) It is not clear whether the *Office* represents good value for money.

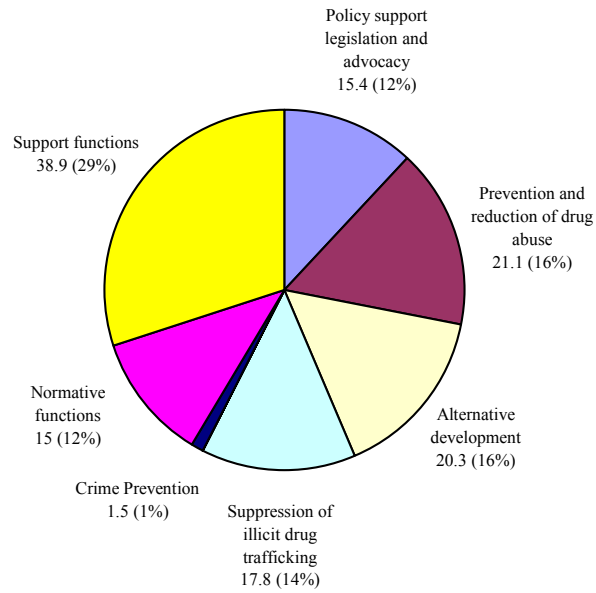
This retrospective review of assets and liabilities was then used as the foundation for the next stage of the exercise: the assessment of what the *Office* can and what it should not do in the period ahead.



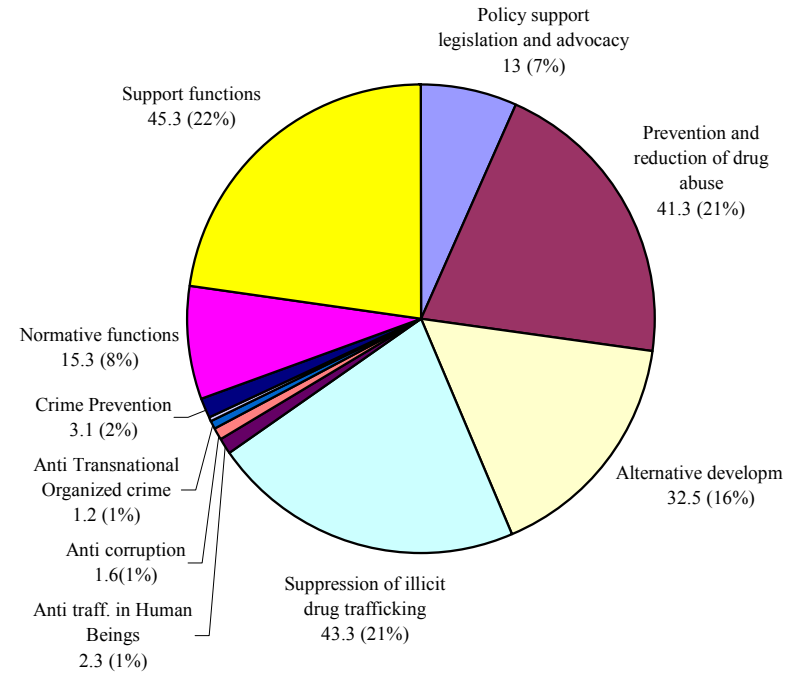
**Figure I. Office on Drugs and Crime: budgets by thematic area**

(Millions of United States dollars)

**1996-1997**



**2002-2003**



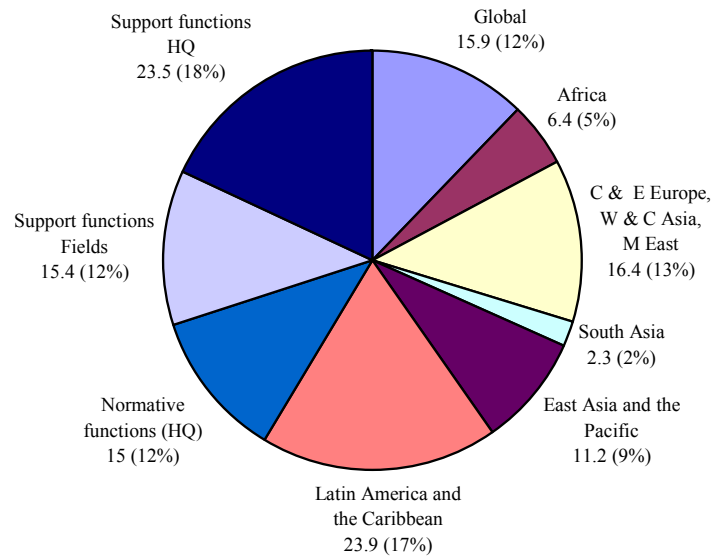
| Funding: | Voluntary Contributions |    | Regular Budget |    | Total |     |
|----------|-------------------------|----|----------------|----|-------|-----|
|          | \$m                     | %  | \$m            | %  | \$m   | %   |
| UNDCP    | 109.1                   | 88 | 15.4           | 12 | 124.5 | 100 |
| CICP     | 1.1                     | 20 | 4.4            | 80 | 5.5   | 100 |
| UNODC    | 110.2                   | 85 | 19.8           | 15 | 130.0 | 100 |

| Funding: | Voluntary Contributions |    | Regular Budget |    | Total |     |
|----------|-------------------------|----|----------------|----|-------|-----|
|          | \$m                     | %  | \$m            | %  | \$m   | %   |
| UNDCP    | 168.5                   | 92 | 15.3           | 8  | 183.8 | 100 |
| CICP     | 8.7                     | 57 | 6.6            | 43 | 15.3  | 100 |
| UNODC    | 177.2                   | 89 | 21.9           | 11 | 199.1 | 100 |

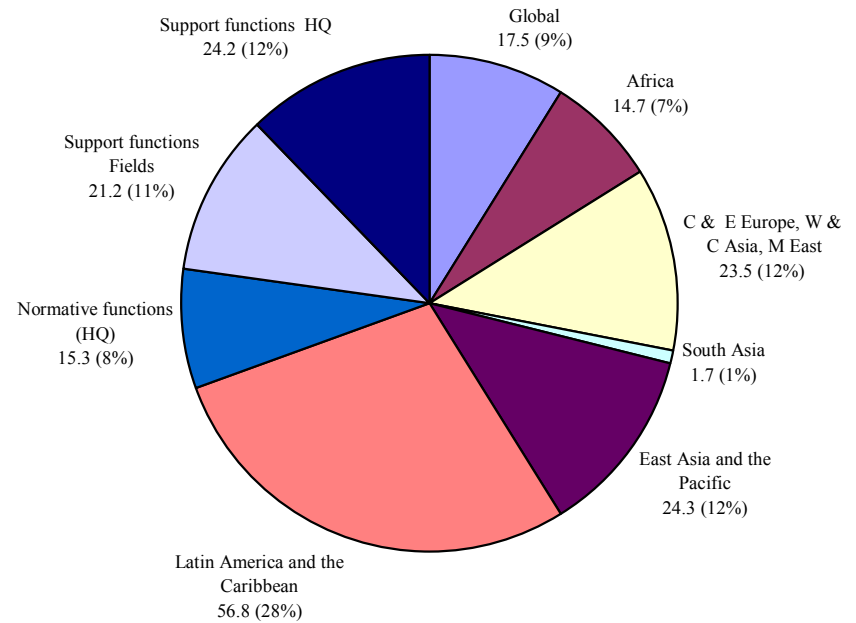
**Figure II. Office on Drugs and Crime: budgets by region**

(Millions of United States dollars)

**1996-1997**



**2002-2003**



| Funding: | Voluntary Contributions |    | Regular Budget |    | Total |     |
|----------|-------------------------|----|----------------|----|-------|-----|
|          | \$m                     | %  | \$m            | %  | \$m   | %   |
| UNDCP    | 109.1                   | 88 | 15.4           | 12 | 124.5 | 100 |
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## II. Operational priorities: guidelines for the medium term

Once the above diagnostic was completed, the *Office* proceeded to craft a guide to operations in the medium term. With expectations and mandates so wide-ranging and hard to turn at any one time into viable operations, a selection process became necessary. That process, in and of itself a useful exercise, was based on further consultations with Headquarters and field office staff. It reflected closely the views of Member States, which were involved from the outset. A questionnaire posted on the Internet to invite feedback from non-governmental organizations also generated interesting ideas.

The conclusion reached is a matter of common sense, rather than science: priority is to be given to programmes and projects in areas where the *Office on Drugs and Crime* enjoys recognizable specialization and offers a unique selling point (namely, a distinctive mandate and a strong support from Member States). For the rest, the potential of devolution and principle of subsidiarity will have to be exploited: activities better performed by others will receive the *Office's* support only in terms of seed money and oversight.

Half a dozen key themes came together to shape the proposed operational priorities for the medium term. They should not be interpreted rigidly; further specification of their operational implications will be a major task for management:

- (a) An integrated approach;
- (b) Sustainable development;
- (c) Prevention and enforcement;
- (d) Knowledge and vision;
- (e) Best practices;
- (f) The power of partnership.

To some extent, the first of the above could be understood as operational priorities, while the remaining ones have a connotation of programmatic and operational instruments. The relative emphasis placed on these themes will vary between countries, reflecting different stages of development and different intensities of social problem. The breaking down of the *country strategies* (see below) into programmes and projects, reflecting both the *Office's* operational priorities and each State's policy environment, is a crucial responsibility of management at Headquarters and in the field.

Furthermore, the volume of operations should not be the sole criterion of the *Office's* performance in a given country: the quality of projects and their impact on the assisted countries are equally important. Effectiveness in delivery and making a difference must be the *Office's* *raison d'être*.

### **Priority 1. Pursue an integrated approach to drug and crime issues**

In real life, drugs and crime are interrelated. Walk in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, the ruins of Kabul, the streets of Soweto or the boroughs of New York to find evidence of this. Since September 11, terrorism has become part of the equation, with money-laundering providing a common denominator.

There is considerable scope for operational synergy in the work of the *Office*. Its *Global Programme against Money-Laundering* is a typical example of a cross-cutting approach to matters that are themselves interrelated. The *Legal Assistance Programme* is another example: while assistance will continue to be specialized depending on the action (whether crime- or drug-related), there is much to be gained by having only one (smaller) team staffed with both sets of expertise rather than two teams working in parallel. Staff members need to operate in a congruous manner, drawing upon one another's knowledge of the country seeking assistance and of the issues at stake.

The same reasoning applies to *Programmes against Illicit Trafficking*. There is much common ground, whether operations concern trade in drugs, arms, people or counterfeits. Law enforcement and prosecution specialists should share experience and goals irrespective of the nature of the "commodity" being trafficked.

An integrated approach is also needed to overcome barriers within, and not only between, sectors. In the drug programme, for example, demand reduction, law enforcement and support for licit livelihoods (alternative development) require different yet interrelated expertise. In the period ahead it will be essential to look at narcotic issues in all their complexity, because supply, traffic and demand are interwoven. If necessary, staff skills will be redefined.

The same applies to the crime programme. Operations will expand, drawing a wider range of specialists, while setting aside the tendency to address crime prevention as a matter separate from law enforcement and criminal justice.

The above is consistent with and supportive of the Secretary-General's report on strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change, according to which efforts to combat terrorism, drug trafficking and international crime must expand as part of an integrated strategy to overcome the forces of uncivil society.

## **Priority 2. Place drug and crime issues in the context of sustainable development**

In recent years, a number of Governments around the world have been voted out of power for not giving adequate consideration to ordinary people's fear of drugs, crime and terrorism. In other words, when civil society feels the pressure stemming from uncivil behaviour, it often reacts with a vengeance.

The Millennium Declaration called drugs, crime and terrorism a threat to peace and security. Indeed, evidence abounds that an economy cannot take off and cruise without good governance and the rule of law. Pouring in resources per se is not a solution as money can flow away as fast as it arrives. A vicious circle is triggered: foreign investors stay away from countries where the law does not rule. Development is thus further impeded.

Uncivil behaviour harms economic performance in many ways. Corruption can bankrupt a nation, denying basic services to honest people and increasing the gap between the rich and the poor. Narco-money trickles up (to the rich), causing capital flight; eventually this illegal money will bleed, rather than nourish, an economic system. Trafficking in human beings, the most evil denial of human rights, recreates slavery and bondage, nourishing the underground economy. Illegal crops keep farmers under the control of traffickers and with a fraction of their huge profits.

Not everybody is engaged in the fight. Many development institutions prefer to keep uncivil society issues out of their operational sight, thus failing to support national campaigns against drug cultivation and trade, even when they are successful.

The *Office on Drugs and Crime* cannot work alone. It can enhance the civil society dimensions of globalization only if its programmes can trigger and become part of common efforts to promote sustainable development.

Within the United Nations system, inter-agency cooperation needs to acquire a new meaning: it has to become a way to telescope and integrate each institution's work. For example, work on drug prevention feeds naturally into the activities of UNAIDS and WHO. The *Office's* work on governance and institution-building can be developed further by UNDP, while rural development activities can be promoted naturally by FAO. This new breed of inter-agency coordination must focus not only on "knowing who does what" but also on "sequencing what is needed".

Outside the United Nations system, there is a similar need for greater integration of programmes. For example, while the *Office* can help countries graduate out of illicit crops cultivation, development banks and aid agencies have to step in, helping these countries graduate into licit crops. The success of Bolivia, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand and others—countries that have been able to stop or reduce substantially the cultivation of raw materials for illicit drugs—needs to be supported by multilateral development banks. Only then will farmers remain committed in the longer term to producing commercially viable legal crops.

To render the notion of sustainable development concrete, the *Office* will frame its initiatives in response to Member States' requests for assistance and in ways that are mindful of local realities. In the case of Africa, projects will emphasize partnership with NEPAD, itself the most important vehicle for United Nations cooperation in the field of socio-economic transformation on the continent.

### **Priority 3. Balance prevention and enforcement activities**

Economists have been arguing for two centuries about whether demand creates its own supply (Keynes) or vice versa (Say). The mafia has settled the point: if the demand for drugs is not adequate to stimulate offer, the latter will oblige—a few doses handed out in school playgrounds in London, Moscow or Karachi will secure lifetime addiction.

The *Office's* corresponding paradigm is simple. Supply needs to be fought, but a lower demand for the "goods" (crime or drugs) will in itself bring about a lower supply. In funding terms this is quite effective, as it is common knowledge that money spent on prevention and treatment (demand) will save several times that amount otherwise needed for enforcement and interdiction (supply).

For the *Office* there is also a question of image. An institution that is part of the United Nations Secretariat should not be seen as an international "vice squad" or as a bureaucracy charged with "sinister affairs". Work on prevention is seen in a positive light that is reassuring.

Recent progress has been encouraging. In the drug programme there is broad acceptance of the need for actions to target simultaneously consumers, producers and traffickers. Law enforcement alone will not succeed without parallel measures to prevent drug abuse and the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts. Conversely,

anti-drug advocacy campaigns will be inadequate unless accompanied by efforts to stop drug traffickers from creating new markets or designing new products.

The same can be said of the crime programme, where for a long time the *Office's* experts have developed projects in support of both law enforcement and prevention. This was the case, for example, with the "tool kit" prepared to help Governments counter corruption.

In the period ahead, the *Office's* twin programmes will reflect a better balance between preventive measures and countermeasures. Although it is tempting to do this by assigning equal budget shares to each, this is not appropriate. Drug supply reduction projects, for example those promoting alternative livelihoods, tend to be more capital-intensive than preventive measures.

The pursuit of a more homogeneous demand and supply approach could be extended to national policies in the assisted countries by turning the *Office's* technical assistance into a stimulus to similarly balanced domestic strategies. After all, lower drug abuse reduces health problems in general, promotes socio-economic inclusion and makes communities safer.

#### **Priority 4. Select operations on the basis of knowledge and strategic vision**

The United Nations has played a historic role in conceptualizing and gathering statistics on socio-economic, trade, demographic and other areas. In recent years, its reputation has spread to other domains. Public concern about uncivil behaviour has generated increasing interest in the *Office on Drugs and Crime* as a repository of relevant facts and figures.

In the period ahead, the *Office* will further improve its knowledge base and analytical work for several reasons:

(a) *For its own operational needs.* Periodic *country profiles* produced by the *Office* provide a snapshot of the crime, drug and terrorism situation in each of the assisted countries. These profiles are used in turn to prepare the relevant *country strategies* that map technical cooperation and provide the best guarantee against opportunistic selection of projects. Facts and figures thus collected are also made available to third parties, as they facilitate better understanding of the impact of drugs, crime and terrorism on economic and social performance;

(b) *For institution-building in assisted countries.* The *Office* has helped set up national institutions (and policies) in the areas of narcotics and criminal justice. Current work in Afghanistan is a model: it shows what the *Office* can do in its advisory and operational capacity for both a national administration (ATA) and the United Nations system as a whole (UNAMA). The *Office's* knowledge of best practices has similarly supported Governments in Southern Africa and Latin America. The Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme is particularly noteworthy as it has supplied crucial information about farmers' behaviour in Afghanistan, Bolivia, Colombia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Peru. This type of technical cooperation, which lies at the heart of the *Office's* work, will need further development;

(c) *For the policy work of governing bodies.* Governments provide data through the *Office* in compliance with the relevant conventions. Despite recent improvements, at times both the quantity and the quality of the information have been inadequate. Some countries still do not have the capacity to provide any

information at all. More technical assistance is needed to address such data deficiencies, which in turn undermine the effectiveness of governing bodies' deliberations.

### **Priority 5. Help establish institutions that promote international best practices**

Best practices are cheap. They already exist. The *Office* will make an impact larger than that commensurate with the (small) size of its resources by emphasizing operations that: (a) identify best practices; (b) are adapted to the country concerned; and (c) are applied to institution-building.

To some extent, the *Office* already does this. The *Declaration on the Guiding Principles on Drug Demand Reduction* adopted by the 1998 GASS are built around this concept. Both the *Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse* and the *Global Youth Network against Drug Abuse* identify successful advocacy schemes at the grass-roots level, making them available worldwide.

The *Office* has also promoted the establishment of drug courts in many countries. This innovative practice helps bridge the gap between the judicial system and drug abuse treatment at low cost. Other programmes have been constructed around the concept of building or enhancing public sector institutions in assisted countries, based on best practices: notable in this regard are the regional *precursor control* initiatives.

More needs be done to promote capacity-building, however. For example, the Convention against Organized Crime provides the vehicle for the rapid adoption of best practices from around the world. Future activities of the *Office's* crime programme aimed at promoting compliance with the Convention will help institutionalize those practices in assisted countries.

The adoption of best practices is not an exclusive prerogative of poor countries. The computerized law enforcement training system and profiling for airport security developed by one of the field offices are receiving attention from enforcement agencies worldwide, including by some that are at the cutting edge of the business. Since "best practices" clone easily and cheaply, the operational emphasis placed on them will alleviate the *Office's* financial constraints.

### **Priority 6. Leverage resources to exploit the power of partnership**

Partnership is a "positive-sum game", with burdens and benefits distributed among the players in such a way that for everyone the benefits are greater than the burdens. The *Office's* wish and need to work with others on the basis of its comparative advantage will become more difficult as the sharing of purpose and of instruments expands. It will require management skill in matching resources to the advantage of the best possible performer among potential partners.

At the project level, such twinning efforts have been successful in a number of areas. Operations set up to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, run in cooperation with UNAIDS, have been linked with activities developed to prevent drug abuse. The same can be said about programmes protecting street children from exploitation and addiction run with UNICEF. Initiatives to combat urban crime, notably in Africa and

Latin America, could be twinned with similar projects by Habitat. These are just a few examples from a long list.

Efforts to amplify the impact of (scarce) resources need to elevate partnership to an even higher plateau, however. Several models will be tested.

#### **1. Partnerships with assisted countries**

These are not a new concept of course; new in the period ahead will be the extent of sharing of ways and means to reach common goals. The *Office's* means are no more than a fraction of those invested by Governments domestically to fight drugs and crime. (In Latin America, we invest about \$40 million a year against a national spending of \$4 billion, a mere 1 per cent.) Therefore, the joint planning (and execution) of national projects on the basis of international “best practices” will:

(a) Place the *Office* at the heart of national policy processes, thus making projects more effective and relevant;

(b) Strengthen the “national ownership of programmes” (a notion weakened by the tight earmarking of resources by donors);

(c) Provide assisted countries with benefits greater than those they can obtain by mobilizing only national resources.

Additional operational efficiency may result from lending, rather than just granting, resources in circumstances when a project's (and a country's) carrying capacity is robust. This new approach deserves consideration.

#### **2. Partnerships with donor institutions**

Such partnerships will require modification of the *Office's* project cycle, with greater involvement of fund providers in the conception of TC operations. At present, projects are born out of a variety of situations. Some are ad hoc. Until now, once management approved a “project idea”, the project document was finalized and attempts were made to identify financing. If funding could not be located, the project was aborted and the development costs lost. Implementation of the new Operational Priorities will reduce waste and delays if opportunism in project selection is replaced by partnerships in all phases of the cycle.

#### **3. Partnerships with development institutions especially multilateral development banks**

Such partnerships will leverage the *Office's* resources to an extent greater than ever done. The *Office* does not have the resources to finance assistance to a region undergoing alternative development. It cannot help peasants now engaged in illegal activities to do something else, a task more appropriately undertaken by aid agencies. Yet it can—and should play midwife. In Bolivia and Thailand, the *Office's* pioneering work to eliminate opium and coca cultivation has triggered a certain amount of development support. There are another dozen countries that need, and deserve the assistance of multilateral development banks, having succeeded in graduating out of illicit (narcotic-based) cultivation. The *Office* can be a catalyst for this to happen.

#### **4. Partnerships with private sector stakeholders**

Partnerships with private sector stakeholders, including civil society organizations – NGOs, foundations and corporate entities, should facilitate the



sharing of both commitment and resources to achieve the *Office's* goals. Here too, the willingness of such institutions to work together will depend on the *Office's* ability to inspire and involve them from the beginning of project planning.

The blending of needs (in the assisted country), knowledge and skills (by the *Office*), and funds (from donors) is a delicate exercise. The purpose of the present Operational Priorities is to ensure a correct approach to the process and to avoid the usual pattern of “deciding first, then looking for funding”. The implications of a project for all parties should be clear at the outset: this is the traditional meaning and the renewed power of partnership. All must be involved, from concept to funding, through implementation and ex post evaluation.

### **III. Context**

Priorities do not exist in isolation. To identify and execute them, a number of guiding principles need to be taken into account, many of which are specific to the *Office*. To apply them, certain enabling conditions must be satisfied. To monitor their effectiveness and impact, a system of accountability must be in place. Let's look at this.

#### **A. Guiding principles**

##### **1. The regional context**

Drug and crime activities have developed their own markets, within and across borders, even across continents and oceans. A reduction in demand for drugs in one location can create a surplus of the product that in turn can be made to meet, or even generate, demand elsewhere. Criminals and terrorists behave in exactly the same way: on the run in one country, they relocate abroad. Consequently, when designing projects, the *Office* needs to pay attention to the risk of succeeding in one place, only to see problems arise elsewhere.

Some uncivil behaviour is transnational in nature, for example, organized crime throughout the world or drug trafficking along routes in Central Asia or from the Andean region. The role of crime in perpetuating humanitarian crises in post-conflict situations is also transnational, for example, in Africa and in the Caucasus. In such cases, it is necessary to link measures against crime (and drugs or terrorism) to broader issues: it is imperative to think globally and act locally.

##### **2. The multilateral approach**

A comparative advantage for the *Office* is its very DNA as a multilateral entity, namely as an honest broker representing the interests of no single Member State.

Diplomacy and political tact are needed in all activities run by the *Office*, however different they may be. One example is the promotion of international consensus for a Convention (i.e. the one on Transnational Organized Crime, or the one on Corruption). An example at the other end of the spectrum is the forging of links between law enforcement agencies in order to track, say, a shipment of arms or narcotics from Central Asia to Eastern Siberia or to Western Europe. No other institution is mandated to or can arrange such multilateral approaches to such vastly different problems.

The multilateral status of the *Office* can also facilitate, even induce, cooperation between Governments. In particular, technical cooperation projects can

be useful when Governments may not wish (to be seen) to work together and prefer to work through a multilateral institution as an intermediary.

### **3. Gender sensitivity**

Projects will continue to take into account the diverse roles played by men and women as participants, quite often unwilling, in illicit activities and as agents for long-term, sustainable change away from uncivil behaviour.

The *Office* will also sharpen its tools to collect gender-disaggregated data, notably in the areas of drug addiction, trafficking in human beings, participation in illicit crop cultivation and the role of traders in drug bazaars, so as to improve project effectiveness.

## **B. Enabling conditions**

### **1. Sound financing**

The *Office's* annual budget is about \$100 million, 10 per cent of which comes from the United Nations regular budget. The rest of its funding is provided through voluntary contributions by several major donors and a handful of mega-donors. Issues of fairness and equitable burden-sharing arise in this regard. In the period ahead, funding will have to rest on several pillars, some old and some new.

#### *(a) The United Nations regular budget*

Given the ever-increasing mandates from governing bodies, there is a contrast between what the *Office* can do (given its funding), and what it is expected to do (given the mandates). Higher regular budget contributions can be allocated only through action by Member States, whose responsibility in this regard cannot be postponed indefinitely.

#### *(b) Voluntary contributions*

Some 20 Governments provide nearly all of the resources available for technical cooperation programmes. Most of those contributions are earmarked for specific projects, with strict conditions attached to their utilization. As a result, the *Office's* room for manoeuvre in relation to the perceived needs of assisted countries is rather limited and the support budget funds are inadequate to pay for the field offices and for new, operationally sensitive activities. Trends in voluntary funding over the period from 1996 to 2002 are shown in the annex.

Several proposals have been made by and for Member States, some of which are receiving attention. Ultimately, a combination of options broad enough to fit each country's budgetary processes is likely to be needed and should be available. In the period immediately ahead, the amount of untied voluntary contributions needs to recover its late 1990s level so as to replenish the drug programme's operational reserve (about \$15 million), which is now depleted (see annex).

#### *(c) Cost-sharing with assisted countries*

Cost-sharing has proved promising in the past few years in the drug programme. It has enabled countries to claim and achieve ownership of their programmes; it has also allowed them to draw on the expertise of the *Office* according to national needs. Building on this, several large middle-income countries are being invited to make the *Office* a partner in their own drug and crime programmes. As a counterpart, the *Office* offers access to a broad knowledge base,

can mobilize “best practice” expertise and can suggest what is needed to improve compliance with the conventions. United Nations support also increases the credibility of Governments’ actions, especially on politically sensitive issues.

As stated above, new forms of cost-sharing ought to be tested, including the lending rather than the granting of resources in circumstances when a project’s (and a country’s) carrying capacity is robust. Greater efficiency in resource utilization would result from such cost-sharing, whether the resources are made available at a cost, or not.

(d) *Fund-raising from the private sector*

*Private sector* fund-raising from foundations and the corporate sector has so far achieved only limited success. Significant breakthroughs in mustering private sector funds for areas such as HIV/AIDS and child welfare give grounds for optimism. However, for the *Office* to achieve similar success in the drug and crime fields, potential donors need to be convinced that they are not being asked to replace needed public sector expenditure and that the benefits to be derived (positive image and show of solidarity, for example) are part of their own corporate strategies.

## 2. **Motivated staff**

The *Office* needs an adequate level of staffing, with staff whose skills are in line with the new Priorities. Attracting and retaining the highest quality staff requires competitive remuneration, a guarantee of good working conditions and personnel management. The first of these, namely the salary, is decided outside the *Office* itself: its level, despite its erosion, is not so bad. The rest depend on the *Office* itself. Efforts must be made to ensure effective career development, including fair prospects of promotion, job security and a sound policy of rotation. Full transparency must prevail in hiring and other key personnel actions.

In an institution where mobility is low and career progress is slow, staff training needs to focus on skills that correspond to changing needs of assisted countries and on “softer” areas, such as team-building, communication skills and leadership.

Personnel management, especially for field staff, needs to be flexible and sensitive to their special work assignments, often in countries where security and living conditions are not good. The current Headquarters-oriented personnel system needs to become more receptive to this issue, which should be kept under review.

## 3. **Field presence**

Managerial responsibility for technical cooperation projects should be invested to the largest possible extent in the field offices in order to permit faster and better-informed decision-making. There is also scope for greater decentralization of expertise and more use of national experts. Lastly, field offices, like Headquarters, need to be able to address both drug and crime issues, as from now on their mandate will cover both.

Implementation of the new Operational Priorities requires that field offices be configured in a rational manner. Their location and size should be consistent with their volume of work. Some offices may also have a high strategic importance and be needed even if the project portfolio is at present low. An in-house exercise, separate from but consistent with the work on the *Office*’s Operational Priorities, is examining field office issues. Mobility of Headquarters staff to the field is desirable and will be pursued.

### **C. Enhancing accountability: turning policy into credible action**

The *Office* must be fully accountable to its stakeholders, that is, to the Member States. Accountability involves much more than the submission of periodic reports on operations: it must be anchored in full transparency and in an objective assessment of performance.

*Internally*, the establishment of an independent (from management) evaluation function will allow the *Office* to assess success and failure in meeting project objectives and in producing impact. Feedback from evaluators serves to influence policy and programming for the future and to help identify best practices.

*Externally*, independent evaluation gives Member States insight into whether project goals have been met and progress is being made towards long-term institutional objectives. The question of the *Office's* value for money can be broached.

*On-line accountability* includes preparing reports for stakeholders, especially regarding the use of their resources. The new ProFi system is designed to make monitoring comprehensive and move towards real-time reporting to capitals. Although initially focused on financial monitoring, ProFi is being enhanced to incorporate programme monitoring as well.

The *Office* must be accountable to its staff. For that reason, in addition to measures introduced for the transparent and fair management of human resources (hiring, career development, mobility and leave), the function of an Ombudsman is being established, supportive of the more general function of the same kind at Headquarters in New York.

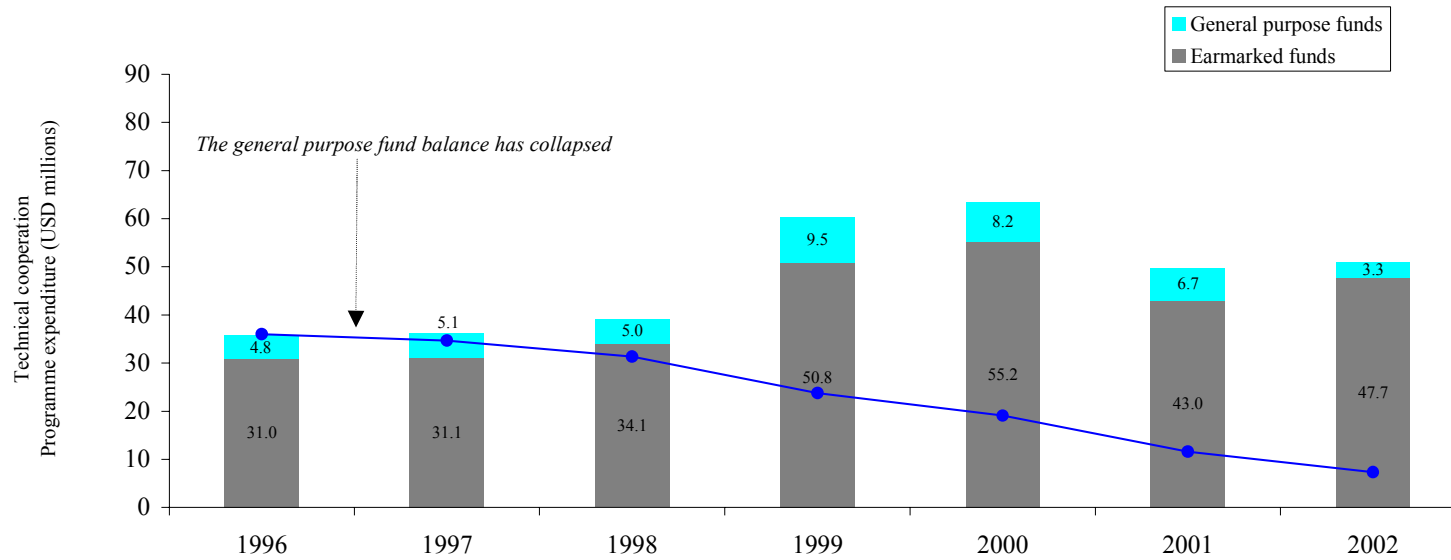
## **IV. Next steps**

The Priorities presented above will provide *Guidelines for Operations in the medium term*. An effort was made to anchor those priorities in the present conditions of assisted countries, including examples drawn from the current work of the *Office*.

Organizational adjustments will be needed in order to facilitate application of the priorities. Better integration of the work of the *Office* will be achieved by establishing a three-pronged management structure, consisting of (a) operational programmes; (b) institutional development; and (c) management support.

The cooperation of stakeholders will be essential. Member States have justifiably commented on the *Office's* tendency to undertake too many activities with limited resources. By establishing clear priorities, the *Office on Drugs and Crime* is therefore attempting to concentrate on what it is best equipped to do. Support from Member States to make this both a realistic aim and a reality will be crucial. Partnership begins right now.

## Annex Office on Drugs and Crime: voluntary funding trends



| Fund source:                 |  | 1996        | 1997        | 1998        | 1999        | 2000        | 2001        | 2002        |
|------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| General purpose              |  | 4.8         | 5.1         | 5.0         | 9.5         | 8.2         | 6.7         | 3.3         |
| Earmarked                    |  | 31.0        | 31.1        | 34.1        | 50.8        | 55.2        | 43.0        | 47.7        |
| <i>Total</i>                 |  | <i>35.8</i> | <i>36.2</i> | <i>39.1</i> | <i>60.3</i> | <i>63.4</i> | <i>49.7</i> | <i>51.0</i> |
| General purpose fund balance |  | 36.0        | 34.7        | 31.3        | 23.8        | 19.1        | 11.6        | 7.3         |