

# Media Update

23 June 2017

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## IOM

Press Release

### Australia Backs IOM Assistance to Undocumented Afghans in Pakistan

The Australian Government and IOM Pakistan have launched a two-year, AUD 4 million (USD 3 million) project to help undocumented Afghans in Pakistan and their host communities, as well as those returning to Afghanistan.

In 2016, an unprecedented number of Afghans returned to Afghanistan, mainly from Pakistan and Iran. They included over 250,000 undocumented returnees and over 380,000 registered refugees.

This year, as of June 20<sup>th</sup>, over 100,000 Afghans have returned home, including almost 70,000 undocumented returnees from Pakistan. This is a 250 percent increase over the number of returnees during the first six months of 2016.

Australia's contribution will enable IOM and its partners to help the Government of Pakistan to develop sustainable solutions for the estimated 500,000-600,000 Afghan nationals still living in Pakistan.

"Australia is committed to partnerships, which promote stability in the region and to help the most vulnerable, particularly women and children," said Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Margaret Adamson.

The new Australian funding will also help IOM and its partners to monitor migration flows and conduct host community surveys to help the Pakistani and Afghan governments, humanitarian stakeholders and returning communities to make better-informed decisions relating to safe and humane migration.



IOM Pakistan will also use the funding to provide primary health care services and vocational business training for undocumented Afghans and host communities in Pakistan. This will help the Afghans to start new livelihoods and reintegrate when they return to Afghanistan, as well as provide new economic opportunities for host communities.

The funding will also help IOM to support the Government of Pakistan to implement its *'Repatriation and Management Policy for Afghan Refugees,'* which includes the registration of undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan.

"IOM is fully committed to support tailored solutions for undocumented Afghans in Pakistan," said IOM Pakistan Chief of Mission Davide Terzi. "Pakistan has been host to millions of Afghans for over 30 years, and it is imperative to devise comprehensive programmes that facilitate returns, create viable options for those that decide to stay and support the Pakistani host communities."

As part of the IOM Regional Response Strategy, IOM Pakistan is seeking USD 21 million to support the most vulnerable undocumented Afghans during 2017-18.

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## United Nations

Message of the Secretary-General

### International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

26 June 2017

**EMBARGOED TILL: 26 June 2017**

Last year, at the UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS), the international community took steps to mobilize a multifaceted, collective response to the full range of issues related to drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Governments came together to chart a new path



forward that is more effective and humane, and leaves no one behind.

UNGASS was a ground-breaking moment that provided a detailed and forward-looking blueprint for action. Together, we must honour the unanimous commitments made to reduce drug abuse, illicit trafficking and the harm that drugs cause, and to ensure that our approach promotes equality, human rights, sustainable development, and greater peace and security. I know from personal experience how an approach based on prevention and treatment can yield positive results. As Prime Minister of Portugal, I used the flexibility afforded by the three international drug control conventions to introduce non-criminal responses to the possession of drugs for personal use. Greater resources were allocated to prevention, treatment, and social reintegration programs, including harm reduction measures.

Portugal now has one of the lowest death rates for drug use in Europe. In 2001, Portugal had the highest rate of HIV amongst injecting drug users in the region; since the introduction of the new policy, this rate, and rates of all sexually transmitted diseases, have decreased dramatically. Overall drug use rates have also fallen.

I am proud of these results and hope this experience will contribute to the discussion and encourage Member States to continue exploring comprehensive and evidence-based solutions.

The UNGASS follow-up process provides us with an institutional framework to learn from each other and share best practices. It is vital that we examine the effectiveness of the War on Drugs approach, and its consequences for human rights.

Despite the risks and challenges inherent in tackling this global problem, I hope and believe we are on the right path, and that together we can implement a coordinated, balanced and comprehensive approach that leads to sustainable solutions.

This would be the best possible way to implement the UNGASS recommendations and to have a positive impact on the lives of millions of people around the world.

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# UNODC

Statement by the Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Yury Fedotov

## International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

26 June 2017

**EMBARGOED TILL: 26 June 2017**

VIENNA, 22 June (UN Information Service) – The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking recognises the severe impact that illicit drugs has on health, development, peace and security. Around 190,000 people die due to illicit drugs every year. But the damage visited upon lives and communities does not stop there. Drug use damages health in the form of debilitating HIV, hepatitis and tuberculosis, while drug trafficking nourishes money laundering, and deadly terrorism. Corruption, the great enabler of organized crime, exists throughout the drug supply chain.

In a collective response to these challenges, last year, countries unanimously agreed an outcome document of the UN General Assembly Special Session containing over 100 recommendations to counter the world drug problem. These recommendations, forged by international consensus, stress the need for affordable science-based treatment and care, especially in prisons and for measures reducing the spread of HIV and other infections.

The recently released World Drug Report 2017 examines another worrying phenomenon: the nexus between drugs, crime and terrorism and reveals a shifting pattern of relationships. To use just one example, terrorists and non-state armed groups profit from the drug trade. By some estimates, up to 85 per cent of opium cultivation in Afghanistan occurs in Taliban-influenced territory. As new threats appear, including spreading methamphetamine and new psychoactive substances, old ones continue to thrive. Business models are evolving too, with cybercrime and the darknet increasingly playing a role.

Once viewed as a marginal actor on the development stage, drugs and crime are now viewed as a disturbing obstruction to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goals 3 on health and



Goal 16 on peaceful societies. Our response is to work closely with partners to prevent drugs and crime not simply profiting from, but also fuelling, the instability that undermines development, peace, and human rights.

UNODC, on this day, remains committed to peacefully and effectively addressing the challenge of illicit drugs based on the international drug control conventions, and their key principle of protecting the health and welfare of humankind.

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