

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING
26 June 2008**

Ten years ago, in response to the seriousness of the world drug problem, Member States of the United Nations convened a Special Session of the General Assembly, where they committed themselves to a vigorous plan of action to reduce both the supply and demand for drugs.

Today, drugs continue to destroy lives, generate crime and threaten sustainable development. But we also have a better understanding of how to confront drug abuse and trafficking. Policymakers can draw on a growing body of evidence about drug dependence and drug-use trends. International cooperation and technical assistance are improving law enforcement capabilities. Increased development assistance is helping to reduce poverty and the sale of illicit crops by giving farmers sustainable alternatives. A stronger focus on prevention and treatment is putting health at the centre of drug-control strategies and helping to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS. And there is a growing consensus, both within communities and among states, that drug control is a shared responsibility in which we all play a part.

We still have much work to do to reduce our vulnerability to drugs. States with weak criminal justice systems and limited law enforcement capabilities need assistance to reduce illicit drug trafficking, which spreads crime, corruption and instability, and which ultimately endangers the successful realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

As we mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I remind all Member States of their responsibility to fully respect the rights of prisoners who are drug dependent or are in custody for drug-related crimes, especially their rights to life and a fair trial. I also call on Member States to ensure that people who are struggling with drug addiction be given equal access to health and social services. No one should be stigmatized or discriminated against because of their dependence on drugs.

The combined efforts over the past decade have greatly enhanced our understanding of the drug problem worldwide and strengthened our capacity and resolve to reduce the damage done by drugs to individuals, their loved ones, to communities and states. On this International Day Against Drug Abuse, let us each shoulder our responsibility to prevent and reduce the damage that drugs do, and thereby build a healthier and safer world.