



UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

The Executive Director

Reference: CU 2002/255

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Anti-Drugs Association – Belgrade
Belgrade 11050, Rtanjska 3/3 Street
FR Yugoslavia

Dear Mr. Ilic,

The year 2002 has been both troubled and eventful, creating the conditions for the re-launching (and, symptomatically, the renaming) of the Office on Drugs and Crime.

In May, following the change in management, an urgent plan of action was launched to improve (a) governance, (b) funding, (c) operations, (d) staff relations, and (e) communications. A strong logic binds these elements together, as each one is a necessary but not sufficient condition for success. Good governance and clear priorities enhance credibility and promote funding.

At the heart of the action plan was an exercise that took half a year of analysis and consultation to complete: the Office's operational priorities, which you will find attached as guidelines for the medium term. These priorities are anchored in the Office's contribution to the Millennium Declaration and are based on the principles governing sustainable development. The Office intends to show unswerving determination in their implementation, building on the comparative advantage it enjoys and without competing with either Member States' bilateral programmes or the work of other United Nations agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations.

The Office is being reorganized to pursue these priorities fully and rapidly. Administrative costs will be reduced, with funds and staff redeployed accordingly, especially to field operations.

As the end of the year draws near, important milestones are in sight. The ministerial segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to be held in April 2003 will take stock of progress in achieving the targets of the special session of the General Assembly held in 1998. Later in the same year, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols should enter into force, while the United Nations Convention against Corruption may be adopted. As international terrorism continues to capture headlines, the Office's Global Programme on Counter-terrorism will have to prove that it can provide countries with unique technical assistance projects for the implementation of the conventions.

As drugs, crime and terrorism are interconnecting across political and cultural borders, the Office needs to have the intellectual strength to dissect, comprehend and tackle these manifestations of "un-civil" behaviour in isolation and for their cruel interaction. The leveraging of resources will be easier, the more realistic the priorities and the greater the support from Member States, civil society and non-governmental organizations. We need to be able to count on one another.

With all best wishes,

Antonio Maria Costa