

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.

Maldives: First ever national drug use survey underway



The first ever national drug use survey has been initiated in the Maldives as part of the UNODC - Government of Maldives partnership project- "Strengthening the national response to combat drug use in the Maldives". The survey aims to provide a reliable estimation of drug users in the country aged 15 to 64 years, identify trends, drug use extent and patterns across the country and also yield key data on drug related harm, co-occurring mental and substance misuse disorders, offending behaviour and its impact on social functioning. Inova Pvt Ltd., a national research organisation, is responsible for conducting the survey, in partnership with

the Ministry of Health and Family (MoHF), Government of Maldives. UNODC and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), India is providing the technical expertise. The initiative is being funded by the European Union.

A multi-sectoral Survey Steering Group has endorsed the proposed methodology and the data collection tools. The training materials and manual for survey enumerators are also currently being developed.

With the report due to be released in early 2012, it is expected that the survey will help strengthen policy making and programme planning in the Maldives. It will further the development and improvement of interventions addressing drug use prevention and treatment as well as associated health and social consequences, thus aiming to improve the lives of drug users, their families and local communities.

North East India: HIV prevention among women who inject drugs

Under a Joint UN project covering the four North Eastern states of Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya, UNODC in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and the State AIDS Control Societies (SACS) of the four states, is working to provide female service delivery models for HIV prevention among women who inject drugs and partners of male injecting drug users (IDUs). On 16 - 17 August 2011, UNODC held a training in Aizawl, Mizoram for NGO staff from the four project sites as well as two NGOs under the Mizoram State AIDS Control Society (MSACS) and project officers of the state government's HIV/AIDS program.

The training covered topics such as reproductive and sexual health, mental health, increasing referrals to other services and documentation. The participants have used the training material and newly acquired knowledge to train other project staff like peer educators and outreach workers.

A Joint UN review meeting of the project also took place in Aizawl, from 17-19 August 2011, where the review team visited the UNODC-supported drop-in-centre for women in Aizawl and interacted with the women who inject drugs, partners of male IDUs and also their children. The project is funded by AusAID.

Upcoming Events

Bangladesh: 15th Sep – Second consultation to develop Behaviour Change Communication strategy for HIV prevention in prisons

India: 20th Sep– Launch of the Indian Armed Violence Assessment by Small Arms Survey, New Delhi

26th Sep – Training programme on 'Prevention of human trafficking with a special focus on women and children' by the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), Government of India, New Delhi

Maldives: 18th - 25th Sep – UNODC/WHO Training of Trainer workshop on drug dependence treatment for government and NGO counterparts.

India: Consultation on safe and honourable tourism

UNODC, together with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India (GoI) is developing an initiative on 'Safe and Honorable Tourism', which specifically addresses issues such as sexual exploitation, pornography, human trafficking and drug use, in connection with tourism.

Following the adoption of the National Code of Conduct on Safe and Honorable Tourism on 1st July 2010, GoI has issued a directive stating that all consultations organized by trade associations of the hospitality and tourism industry in India should include a session on safe & honorable tourism. The Tourist Guides Federation of India organised the first such convention from 29-30 August 2011, in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, where UNODC made a presentation on human trafficking, exploitation of women and children in tourism, global initiatives to address these concerns and possible responses of the Indian tourism industry. The 250 strong audience was enthusiastic, sharing evidence from the ground, expressing the need for awareness on this subject at multiple levels and committing their solidarity to the cause. Similar conventions will be held in different parts of the country over the year.

Highlights from UNODC's prison project in South Asia



North-East India: Under UNODC's regional project on HIV prevention among prison inmates, a facility integrated ICTC (Integrated Counseling and Testing Centre) for HIV was launched in the Central Jail, Aizawl, Mizoram on 10th August 2011. A first of its kind initiative in the state, it reflects the joint efforts of the Mizoram State Control Society (MSACS), the Government of Mizoram, the Prison department, UNODC and SHALOM (NGO). This will make it easier for inmates to volunteer for HIV testing and counselling in the prison complex itself, without having to be escorted to the government hospital 10 kms away and facing any stigma from the community members there. The prison medical team has been trained to conduct the tests. The figures from the prison will be reflected in the state data base also.

Bangladesh: UNODC in collaboration with CARE, an NGO, is developing a prison specific strategy for effective behavior change communication (BCC) activities in 6 prisons of the country. The first consultative meeting to develop the strategy took place in Dhaka on 2nd August 2011, which was attended by UNODC's prison project stakeholders and the methodology for developing the strategy was discussed. As the next step, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and review of research data from the prison sites will be conducted, in addition to getting inputs from beneficiaries and stakeholders.

UNODC INTERNAL NEWS CORNER

Our Office bids farewell to two of our colleagues, Ashwani Sinha and Sonia Singh.



Ashwani joined UNODC in May 2009 as IT Associate, managing the IT systems in the office, providing support to the Global IT team and UNODC's Computer Based Training for drug law enforcement.

He has now joined a private sector firm.



Sonia joined UNODC in August 2007 as Program Assistant, providing financial and administrative support to projects on HIV prevention among drug users, anti human trafficking and drug law enforcement. She has moved with her family to Dubai.

We wish them all the very best for their new assignments and lives ahead!

We also welcome two new colleagues who have joined our office in New Delhi.



Dr Alpna Mittal (Left) is a medical doctor with a Masters in Public Health. Ms Himakshi Piplani (Right) is a law graduate with prior experience in the area of HIV/AIDS. Both of them will be providing technical and research support for the regional project on HIV prevention amongst drug users.