

**UNODC IN SOUTH ASIA: 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**

## Sri Lanka: National sensitization workshops on comprehensive HIV prevention in prisons



The first national level sensitization cum training workshop on HIV prevention in prison settings in Sri Lanka was conducted between 14 and 16 December 2010 in Colombo. This was followed by the second national level workshop, held between 18 and 21 January 2011 in Kandy. Both the workshops, which covered 10 prison intervention sites in the country, were led by the National Dangerous Drug Control Board (NDDCB), Sri Lanka in association with UNODC.

The workshops brought together nearly 55 officials from various departments, such as jail superintendents, jailors, medical officers and welfare officers. They discussed and learnt about the different components of the comprehensive package of services for HIV prevention, especially condom programming, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, voluntary counseling and testing, needle syringe programmes and HIV-TB services. The trainings and discussions were especially relevant, given the issues of overcrowding and drug use-HIV related vulnerabilities amongst the inmates and also as an important capacity building effort to initiate HIV prevention activities in the prisons.

A site specific work plan, covering the priorities for the intervention was also developed by the prison teams with the technical support of UNODC. With the successful completion of the workshops and development of the work plan, UNODC and the NDDCB together have laid the foundation for rolling out effective HIV prevention initiatives in the prisons of Sri Lanka.

## Nepal: First national conference on harm reduction and the media



The first national 'Harm Reduction Media Conference' was held between 11 - 12 January 2011 in Kathmandu. The event was organized by Recovering Nepal, an NGO and supported by UNODC and other partners. Focused on the theme of 'Media, Policy and Harm Reduction', the main aim of conference was to strengthen partnerships between the media and other

stakeholders to improve the national response in implementing harm reduction and HIV prevention programs. Along with sensitizing the media about their role in disseminating accurate information to the general public on topics such as drug use, HIV and harm reduction, the conference also aimed at educating the stakeholders working in the field of drugs and HIV/AIDS to recognize the media as a useful tool to educate people and influence policy.

The event was inaugurated by Mr. Shankar Pokhrel, the Honorable Minister of Information and Communication. This was followed by discussions on harm reduction, human rights and HIV/AIDS and the role of media in addressing these issues. The conference concluded with an eight point declaration to improve harm reduction strategies in the country.

## UN Ombudsman visits UNODC ROSA, New Delhi



As part of his mission to India, Mr. John Barkat, the UN Ombudsman, Assistant Secretary - General to India visited UNODC ROSA on 31 January 2011. The Ombudsman's Office is part of the UN's internal justice system, which can interact with and mediate for persons/parties upon their request.

During his visit, Mr Barkat made a short presentation explaining the role of the Ombudsman's Office. This was followed by an interactive session with the staff, where he talked about the role of mediation to solve problems, the kind of issues that could be resolved and also some of the challenges he faced in his profession. He also urged the staff to contact of the Ombudsman's office whenever required. Information on the UN Ombudsman can be found at: <http://www.un.org/en/ombudsman/>

## Maldives: Inauguration of the UNODC developed Computer Based Training (CBT)



On the occasion of the International Customs Day on 26 January 2011, the UNODC developed Computer Based Training (CBT) was formally launched in the country at the office of the Maldives Customs Service. This is part of the UNODC - Government of Maldives partnership to strengthen

drug law enforcement capacities in South Asia. Mr Mohamed Aswan, the Minister of State for Home Affairs and Head of the Maldives Customs Service delivered the opening remarks. The '1416 Public Awareness Program', was also launched on the occasion; 1416 being the customs toll free number to report suspected cases of drug trafficking.

Ms Cristina Albertin, UNODC Representative for South Asia, inaugurated the CBT and talked about its merits as a training tool based on global best practices. She also spoke about the mandate of UNODC in areas of transnational organized crime including anti piracy. She then presented the World Customs Organization (WCO) Certificates of Merit 2010 to the award winning officers in the Maldives.

The inaugural ceremony was followed by a two-day training programme on the CBT for 20 law enforcement officials of Maldives, which included personnel from the customs, police, coast guard, the Maldives National Defence Force and immigration. Five CBT managers were also trained to conduct CBT trainings in the future.

## UNODC INTERNAL NEWS CORNER



Our office welcomes Ms Sarah Waller, the project coordinator for the UNODC project "Strengthening of national capacities in drug use prevention and treatment in Maldives". Sarah has an academic background in psychology and criminal justice with several years of professional experience in managing comprehensive drug treatment, harm reduction and HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention and care services across the UK.

Until recently, Sarah was working with UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan. We wish her all the best for her new assignment in the Maldives.