

Every year, 26th June is observed as the 'International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' or 'World Drug Day'. The theme for this year's celebrations was 'Global Action for Healthy Communities without Drugs'. We are pleased to share with you some of the main activities that were supported by UNODC in Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Nepal to commemorate World Drug Day 2011.

India



The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India organised an event on 26th June in New Delhi, India's capital, to mark 'World Drug Day'. Representatives from relevant government departments and agencies, the civil society and UNODC participated in the event, giving an overview of the various measures undertaken to address drug use in the country and also outlining the Government's future plans for the same. Ms Cristina Albertin, UNODC Representative for South Asia read the UN Secretary General's message for the Day. A 'Trainer's Manual on

Drug Use Prevention Treatment and Care for Street Children', developed by UNODC in collaboration with the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), Government of India, was also released at the event.

Various government departments, NGOs and UNODC joined hands to celebrate 'World Drug Day' in Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland states of North East India, where UNODC works on HIV prevention amongst female injecting drug users (FIDUs) and female partners of male injecting drug users. A state level event took place in Aizawl, Mizoram, starting with a "Walk against Drugs" by around 500 senior school students. The main event took place thereafter, where the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Mizoram, Mr. Lalthanhawla was the Chief Guest. Through street plays, interactions and quiz programs, NGOs in the four states made special efforts to highlight the issue of FIDUs, sensitizing stakeholders and the general public to provide greater support to female drug users without stigma and discrimination.



Bangladesh

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Government of Bangladesh and the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) in collaboration with NGOs and UNODC commemorated 'World Drug Day'. A rally and human chain by different stakeholders in Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital, preceded the main event where government dignitaries and other distinguished guests were present. NGOs and government representatives took the initiative to raise awareness about drug related harm through information kiosks, distribution of communication material, discussions and essay writing competitions.



Maldives



26 June 2011 marked the launch of '1410', a 24/7 toll-free national drugs helpline in the country. A collaboration between UNODC, Ministry of Health and Family, local telecoms providers and supported by the European Union (EU), the helpline reaches out to drug users seeking treatment, their families and co-dependants and provides community members with information on drug treatment, care and associated support services available in the country. Mr. Mohamed Nasheed, the President of Maldives, launched the helpline in Male, Maldives' capital city.

World Drug Day was also celebrated across seven atolls in the country, where UNODC's NGO partners organized awareness programs and advocacy meetings, specially targeting parents and the youth. The Department of Drug Prevention and Rehabilitation Services (DDPRS), Government of Maldives also held a one-day drug awareness and sensitization workshop for media presenters from five national TV and radio stations. Similar workshops will be held in the future.

On 27th June 2011, the first ever rehabilitation centre for female drug users was inaugurated by the President of Maldives at VilliMale island. A collaboration between the DDPRS and UNODC, the women's drug rehabilitation centre provides both out-patient and in-patient drug treatment services exclusively for women who use drugs, based on evidence-based treatment approaches.



Nepal

Nepal celebrated World Drug Day with a week-long campaign where the Ministry of Home Affairs played the lead role, in collaboration with other partners including Government District Offices, NGOs, and UNODC. Throughout the week, UNODC's NGO partners across the country organized rallies, dramas, video shows and media interactions to raise public awareness about the ill effects of drugs. The grand finale on 26th June started with a rally in Kathmandu, where more than a dozen schools, civil society civil society organisations, and senior government officials including law enforcement personnel participated. During the main programme, all stakeholders pledged their commitment to increase awareness about drug related hazards and stressed on the need for an effective national policy and response to drug use and HIV in the country. Two renowned Nepali film actors, Mr. Madan Krishna Shrestha & Mr. Haribansh Acharya were appointed as goodwill ambassadors for the anti-drug campaign who extended their commitment to the cause.

