

**For IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **UNODC Executive Director meets Thai Deputy PM**

### ***Offers support to fight region's worsening organized crime and illicit drug trafficking trends***

**Vienna/Bangkok, 29 November 2012** – Mr. Fedotov, on his first official visit to Southeast Asia, today met Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, at his offices in the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Since 1971, Bangkok has been UNODC's base of operations in the region and is currently home to the UNODC Regional Centre, Mr. Fedotov re-affirmed UNODC's close partnerships with Thai Government institutions and thanked the Thai DPM for the country's hospitality and financial contribution to UNODC. Mr. Fedotov pledged UNODC support to the nation's struggle against these human security threats.

“The illicit manufacture, trafficking and use of opiates and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) are the two most significant illicit drug threats in the ASEAN region today. Southeast Asia accounts for 50% of the world's methamphetamine seizures. The region is the world's second largest producer of illicit opium poppy, after Afghanistan,” said Mr. Fedotov.

In his meetings with government officials, the Executive Director emphasized the importance of promoting evidence-and human rights-based drug treatment approaches rather than compulsory treatment for illicit drug users.

“In Thailand and throughout East Asia, transnational organized criminal syndicates trade in illicit drugs, human beings, counterfeit products, fake medicines, protected natural resources like timber, fish and wildlife, and goods that harm the environment. They are a threat to public health and society's well-being. We need to put them out of business.” said Mr. Fedotov.

“UNODC will continue to assist the Government and people of Thailand to fight illicit drugs, organized crime, corruption and terrorism – and to overcome other, emerging obstacles to human security, dignity and development.”

As part of his visit to Thailand, Mr. Fedotov will meet with key criminal justice and law enforcement officials at the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Attorney General.

Mr. Fedotov will visit Thailand's neighbor Myanmar Friday before visiting UNODC field operations in Shan State over the weekend. Afterwards, he will go on to Viet Nam and Lao PDR before concluding his five-country mission in Indonesia, where he will engage both with government counterparts and ASEAN leadership.

During his mission, Mr. Fedotov plans to discuss and engage with stakeholders on a broad range of threats including illicit drugs, transnational organized crime, anti-corruption, environmental crimes, including the illegal trade in timber and protected wildlife, and human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

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