

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING
26 June 2007**

Drug abuse is a problem that can be prevented, treated and controlled. While efforts must be stepped up to reduce supply -- by helping growers of illicit crops find viable licit alternatives, and ensuring that law enforcement agencies continue their good work in seizing drugs -- the greatest challenge in global drug control is reducing demand. With less demand, there would be less need for supply, and fewer incentives for criminals to traffic drugs.

Combatting drug abuse is a collective effort. It requires political leadership and sufficient resources -- particularly for more and better treatment facilities. It requires the engagement of parents and teachers as well as health care and social workers. It requires the media and criminal justice officials to play their part.

All walks of life must join forces and devote special attention to the vulnerable: to those who are vulnerable to taking drugs because of their personal or family situation, and to those who are vulnerable because they take drugs. Our mission is to enable them to take control of their lives, rather than allowing their lives to be controlled by drugs. That means giving young people sound guidance, employment opportunities, and the chance to be involved in activities that help organize life and give it meaning and value. It means supporting parents' efforts to provide love and leadership. It means reaching out to marginalized groups and ensuring they receive the care they need to cope with behavioural, psychological or medical problems. It means providing reasons to hope.

For those who are grappling with addiction, effective treatment is essential. Drug abuse is a disease that must be treated on the basis of evidence, not ideology. I urge Member States to devote more attention to early detection; to do more to prevent the spread of disease -- particularly HIV and hepatitis -- through drug use; to treat all forms of addiction; and to integrate drug treatment into the mainstream of public health and social services.

Drug abuse brings anguish and torment to individuals and their loved ones. It eats away at the fabric of the human being, of the family, of society. It is a subject all of us must take personally. On this International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, let us ensure there is no place for drugs in our lives or our communities.