

26 June 2014

**Message of H.E. John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
for United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit
Trafficking**

On this International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, let us recognize across the world, that illicit drugs undermine political stability, weaken democratic institutions and threaten the achievement of sustainable development, while impeding our global efforts to eradicate poverty and glaring wealth inequalities.

The United Nations General Assembly has long recognized the importance of confronting illicit drug trafficking as a pillar of the development agenda. In 2012, the General Assembly considered the threats posed by drugs and drug-related crime to development and in 2013 adopted essential guiding principles on alternative development for farmers. These principles underline the commitment of the United Nations to confronting the impact of illicit drugs, while also working ceaselessly to lift millions out of poverty and desperation.

The promotion of alternative livelihoods, however, cannot end with assistance regarding crop planting. To prosper and flourish, farmers need thriving markets, and proper infrastructure, such as the roads and bridges necessary to deliver their goods. I encourage Member States and the international community to help by integrating alternative development into wider initiatives to help countries achieve greater prosperity for their citizens.

In moving forward with the Post-2015 Development Agenda, it is important that nations continue to work together on these many challenges and support this vital work by offering viable economic alternatives to the production and distribution of illicit drugs and thereby supporting sustainable development.