

26 June 2003

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**

“Let’s talk about drugs.” The theme of this year’s International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking provides a chance to talk – in our homes, in our local communities, in our global community – about drug abuse, the problems it creates, and the ways we might prevent it.

Drug abuse is a global problem. Narcotics are produced all over the world. Drug trafficking knows no boundaries. An estimated 200 million people worldwide consume illicit drugs. Drug abuse furthers socio-economic and political instability, it undermines sustainable development, and it hampers efforts to reduce poverty and crime.

We talked about drugs a great deal at the United Nations this year. In April, we held our 46th Session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs, and more than 100 Member States participated in a ministerial-level session to assess the effectiveness of the existing network of drug control policies.

In some cases, the policies seem to be working. Cultivation and production are down in the Golden Triangle of South East Asia and in the Andes of Latin America. Trafficking routes are under pressure from international law enforcement. Demand for drugs is down in Bolivia, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand and Turkey.

But these successes are diminished by dismaying trends elsewhere. Afghanistan is producing record crops of poppies. Drug abuse is on the rise in the new markets of Eastern Europe, Russia and China. Injecting drug use is becoming one of the main modes of HIV/AIDS proliferation in many parts of the world. Synthetic drugs pose a yet to be fully understood threat.

What do these trends mean? They mean that we need to keep talking.

On this International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, I call upon Member States, Donor States and Non-State Organizations to recommit themselves to an international cooperative effort to control illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption. Action must be multifaceted and complementary, involving alternative crop development, international law enforcement and various demand-reduction strategies.

If we are to have any hope of solving the global drug problem, we are going to need to work together to forge a global solution.