

23 June 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the 2011 World Drug Report Launch**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to take part in the launch of the 2011 World Drug Report.

Drug abuse and drug trafficking threaten the health and well-being of people all over the world. They also undermine security and development in some regions.

The international community shares responsibility for tackling the global drug problem. But to ensure that our counter-narcotics efforts are effective, we need reliable information.

That is why the World Drug Report is significant. It is a comprehensive analysis of the global drug problem, produced annually by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It is an important tool for the entire international community, providing reliable information on illicit drugs and an objective analysis of trends in the evolution of drug markets. This helps us to develop counter-narcotics strategies that work.

Drug markets and drug use patterns change over time and have global dimensions. The World Drug Report keeps us up-to-date on the latest global, regional and national trends and alerts us to new kinds of drugs, new trafficking routes and other emerging challenges.

The Report also gives the entire international community as well as individual Member States an opportunity to assess progress in confronting the global drug problem. We draw on its findings to develop national, regional and international counter-narcotic policies and interventions.

But, as the Report highlights, there are still large gaps in our knowledge about the drug problem. A lack of complete information obstructs our full understanding of the issue. The gaps are most prominent in some regions, such as Africa and Asia, but there are significant data gaps in other regions too, including in the developed world. We also lack comprehensive data on new drugs and changing consumption patterns. More generally, we need to better understand illicit drug markets, from production, to trafficking and to consumption, as well as how these markets operate and how policy interventions can affect them.

I urge Member States to strengthen their efforts to gather data on illicit drugs. And as part of our shared responsibility to confront the challenge from drugs, I also encourage donor nations to support those countries that need assistance in these efforts by enhancing the data collection and research capacity of their Governments and national research institutions.

More comprehensive data on the global drug problem will allow for better analysis, which in turn will strengthen the international community's ability to respond effectively.

Tackling the global drug problem is ultimately about saving lives, preserving families and making communities safer world-wide. The World Drug Report is an essential resource to help us do that.

Thank you.