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EMBARGO:

1 March 2007

0001 hours GMT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

For many generations, attempts have been made to combat the adverse effects of illicit drug trafficking and abuse, and institutions have been set up at the national and international level to address this issue. Significant progress has been made in reducing illicit drug trafficking and abuse and yet a lot more remains to be done.

Many countries are being targeted by drug traffickers, resulting in the shipment of large consignments of illicit narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals. Larger seizures of cocaine and heroin in illicit traffic suggest the existence of highly organized criminal syndicates who must be stopped and apprehended in their efforts to move drugs around the globe with impunity. The seizures also suggest that improvements in interdiction efforts and intelligence sharing are necessary.

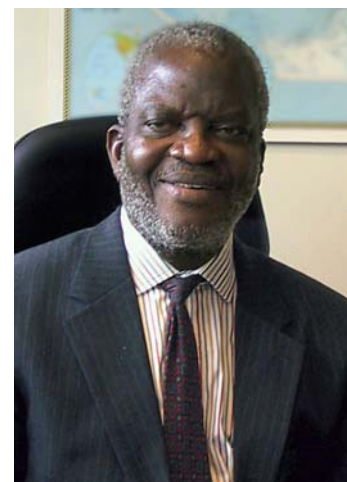
Although the phenomenon of the unregulated market is not a new one, it is of particular concern to the Board that in recent years, an increasing volume and variety of internationally controlled substances are available in the unregulated market. In addition, traffickers are turning to innovative ways of trafficking and diverting such substances, including the transnational distribution of counterfeit drugs and the use of the Internet and the postal and courier services for illicit drug trafficking.

Activities of the unregulated market expose patients to serious health risks through the delivery of often poorly documented, unsafe, ineffective or low quality medicines. Moreover, gains over the past years in international drug control may be seriously undermined by this ominous development, if it remains unchecked. The root causes of this problem need to be identified and remedial measures taken as a matter of urgency.

In an age where technological developments are being used for sinister purposes, persons engaged in drug law enforcement and drug regulation need to be better trained and equipped. We should deploy our expertise for the good of all by cooperating and collaborating better, while guarding our mandates. Intelligence sharing between States should be further strengthened for assisting in the interception of drugs in illicit traffic.

Governments should also recognize the importance of drug demand reduction activities in alleviating the drug problem. Governments should introduce drug demand reduction programmes including treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes that are effective, accessible, affordable and sustainable.

Eventual success in tackling the world drug problem depends not only on appropriate legislation that is effectively implemented, but also on well-designed demand reduction programmes that are conducted by well-motivated human resources, as they play a significant role in determining how successful the outcome of our efforts are. There is need for circumspection in designating men and women who lead our drug control authorities.





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At the international level, organizations having mandates for international drug control should work together more closely. The time for isolationism is over. Ultimately the resolution of the world drug problem depends on responsible actions by all of us, children, parents, civil society and governments. Let us join hands to rid the world of its drug problem. We have a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the people of the world. Let us make the difference.

Philip O. Emafo

President of the International Narcotics Control Board