

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT VIENNA



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

The Director-General

The Executive Director

Introductory remarks by

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Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the United Nations Office at Vienna.

These are exciting times in the United Nations. There is a strong spirit to renew and reform the Organization's work. Mandates are being reviewed, management improvements have been proposed, and the call has gone out to strengthen the system's coherence.

The G77 is one of the biggest stakeholders in this process. You will also be one of the biggest beneficiaries of change. A strengthened and more effective United Nations would be better placed and equipped to tackle issues – especially development – that are your core interests.

Vienna has strongly supported New York's progress towards reform. As we enter the seventh year of the 21st century, we must ensure that the entire UN sets the example for the world on accountability and professionalism. I am especially proud of the new ethics office, and I want to thank you for your leadership on this.

The entire United Nations is affected. Now we must move swiftly to the next phase – an independent Audit Committee, new international accounting standards, a modern finance and human resources management, and annual reporting that provides you, the Member States, important information on performance and accountability. These things are essential and of immediate need, in New York, Vienna, Geneva, Nairobi, as well as everywhere else.

How can the United Nations Office in Vienna contribute to this process? Let me answer this question while wearing two hats, first as Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna, and second as Executive Director of UNODC.

UNOV is a flagship for reform. In areas like Accountability, Ethics and Compliance, IT, Conference Services, Financial and Human Resources Management, the Vienna Office has demonstrated on a daily basis that investing in the United Nations can pay dividends in terms of more efficiency and professionalism.

With my hat on as Executive Director of the UN *Office on Drugs and Crime*, let me tell you what we are doing to help States to tackle some of the evils that hinder development, justice and good governance.

Crime and corruption impede development and lack of development can generate crime and corruption. This has been shown in UNODC's report on *Crime and Development in Africa* and will be featured in upcoming reports on Central America, the Caribbean and the Balkans.

Lack of development deepens poverty and frustration. This can fuel brain-drain. It may lead people to take risks to seek a better future elsewhere, making them vulnerable to human trafficking and people smuggling. It can motivate some to take short cuts – avoiding taxes, paying bribes, trading on the black market – leading to corruption. This can lead to instability in societies where the rule of law is weak and weapons are readily available.

Development is the best way to avoid much of this and I believe that peace, security and improved economic conditions are the best enemies of crime, drugs and violence.

UNODC is a small player with a big mandate. We help States to build capacity to strengthen their ability to prevent and suppress uncivil society. But the institutional context for UNODC's work is not right yet.

A strong drug control regime is in place, anchored in three Conventions that are almost universally ratified. When you take a century-long perspective, or just look at the trends of the past few years, the world drug problem *is* being contained. To go even further, consuming States need to reduce demand, and to assist growers of illicit crops to secure viable means of alternative development.

However, the global crime prevention regime is behind in its development and is taking shape slowly. The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols (against trafficking in persons, of migrants, and of firearms) is moving from ratification to domestic implementation. So too is the UN Convention Against Corruption. These are powerful weapons – if they are used. Some members have yet to ratify these important instruments. I urge you to do so. I know that some G77 States face challenges in implementation. UNODC can help, both in terms of legal and technical assistance. Above all, I call on your help to strengthen the international crime prevention regime and develop effective mechanisms of monitoring implementation of these conventions.

Our work requires close co-operation within the UN family, whether it be, for example, between UNODC, UNIDO and UNDP on development issues, or between UNODC and the World Bank on corruption.

It also means leveraging the capacities of others to affect change – for example, encouraging development banks and international financial institutions to support alternative development. I take the opportunity of sharing this panel with my good colleague Mr. Suleiman Al-Herbish to draw your attention to a joint project between UNODC and the OPEC Fund for International Development for improving HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities among drug users and in prison settings in Central Asia. This is a great model of partnership that UNODC is seeking to copy with others.

Co-operation between states is vital. UNODC is supporting greater regional co-operation to improve the capacity of states to work across borders to prevent and counter trans-national threats. We have done so in Central Asia and the Gulf – other theatres will no doubt follow.

Most important of all, States must live up to the commitments that *they* have made to promote peace, security and development. I urge G77 to set a target for itself – to ratify the UN Conventions against trans-national crime and corruption by this time next year. That would be a huge demonstration of political will, showing that States are committed to doing their part to take on the debilitating effects of crime and corruption. And that is only the first – frankly easy – step. The key is then to implement these conventions into practice. UNODC is at your disposal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have left you with some food for thought on what G77 and UNODC can do to promote development by combating crime and corruption. I look forward to your statements and to the ensuing debate.

Thank you for attention and I wish you a productive meeting.