



**2026 INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT
TRAFFICKING
PRESS RELEASE**

One Voice One Message (OVOM) joins the rest of the international community to commemorate the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking – a day the international community sets aside to reiterate the resolve and commitment towards addressing the scourge of substance abuse and its multifaceted adverse effects on society.

In the light of increasing efforts by some to support, increase or in any way normalise the use and or consumption of illicit drugs, the theme for the 2026 commemorations, “***Break the cycle. #StopOrganisedCrime***”, is most apt as it brings to the attention of all a salient and potent nexus between traffickers of drugs and those who in any manner, whatsoever, promote the demand and consumption of drugs. When it is realised that illicit trafficking of drugs exists to serve the demand for drugs, and that ordinarily, it is in the best interest of traffickers for drug use to be normalised, the need for a holistic approach to curb the menace of drug traffickers becomes apparent.

We are concerned that in addition to the menace of drug trafficking groups seeking out new “*technological innovation to target new audiences and ensure that drugs increasingly reach their users and help boost their billion-dollar businesses*”, the world is now faced with the reality of drug use groups seeking out *advocacy and other innovation to target new audiences and ensure that drugs increasingly reach their users and help boost their billion-dollar businesses*” at immeasurable costs to individual users, their families and the society at large.

We are very much aware that entities that profit from illicit drug use (be they producers, traffickers and pro-drugs advocacy groups), always seek to exploit gaps in governance and regulatory measures. This is all the more reason why there must be increased vigilance and tightening of regulatory mechanisms, to avoid those gaps being exploited and thus ensure that as intended by internationally adopted instruments to which most countries have committed, society is protected from illicit drugs.

OVOM calls upon the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the United Nations system (particularly UNODC), countries across the world and relevant stakeholders in efforts at tackling the scourge of substance abuse, inclusive of communities and families, to recognize the nexus between drug traffickers, increased drug use and the activities of those who, under the guise of promoting ‘harm reduction’ or similar nomenclature, strive to normalize or promote drug use. There certainly is a relationship. Any meaningful effort at holistically addressing drug trafficking must involve the prevention of initiation of drug use, protection of the child from all facets of drug use [(as envisaged by Article 33 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)].

A deft implementation of Article 33 CRC remains a veritable means for ensuring the protection of society from illicit drugs which will at the same time reduce both supply and demand for illicit drugs, strengthen prevention services whilst addressing the root causes that make communities vulnerable to organised crimes. The Eindhoven Declaration (www.ovom.org) represents a succinct and actionable means to achieving the globally desired objectives of protecting society (and the child in particular) from the scourge of drug abuse, and to ‘Break the cycle. #StopOrganisedCrime”.

ONE VOICE ONE MESSAGE (OVOM)

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