

Opening Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Dr. Phan Kieu Thu, Secretary-General of the Colombo Plan at the ISSUP 2019 International Conference on Drug Prevention, Treatment and Care held at the Vienna International Centre, Austria from 1st to 5th July 2019 in partnership with UNODC.

Dear Colleagues in UNODC, Mr Robert Leventhal, dear friends at the US Department of State's INL, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured to speak here today as the 7th Secretary General of the Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan was established on 1 July 1951 by Australia, Canada, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom and currently has expanded to 27 member countries including non-Commonwealth countries and countries belonging to regional groupings such as ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and countries in Asia-Pacific. This is an organization that has pioneered to assist its member states in the post war development efforts in all areas of infrastructure facilities. Even today these major infrastructure facilities remain as witness to the historical service rendered by the Colombo Plan to its member states. In recent times, the Colombo Plan programs range from Drug Advisory to Gender Affairs, Capacity building and Environment.

Having said that, I would like to move on to speak on the Drug Advisory program of the Colombo Plan which is relevant to today's Agenda. These days, we focus on one of the most important topics that concerns not only the Colombo Plan but the whole world. The Colombo Plan is deeply rooted in its efforts and commitments working with the Bureau of the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement of the US Department of State in spearheading the global fight against the drug menace.

Moving on, I will present to you in a nutshell the rest of the work of the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory program.

The Drug Advisory Programme (DAP) is one of the four programs of the Colombo Plan. It was established in 1973 to address the growing problem of substance use and trafficking concerns of its member states and beyond.

DAP's primary focus is on the capacity-building of individuals, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society who are currently working on enhancing their knowledge, skills and competencies in the demand and supply of substance use and abuse.

DAP's projects encompass curriculum development and training on the universal prevention and treatment curricula as well as specialized curricula.

The two main curricula are: Universal Prevention Curriculum for Substance Use for Coordinators (UPC-C) and Implementers (UPC-I) designed to educate substance use prevention practitioners on the science, knowledge, skills, and competencies associated with the implementation of evidence-based prevention interventions in various settings such as family, school, workplace and community. The Universal Treatment Curriculum for Substance Use Disorders (UTC) focuses on current evidence-based practices in the delivery of treatment services.

The specialized curricula include the Child Intervention for Living Drug Free Curriculum (CHILD), Recovery Coach Curriculum, (RC) Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Curriculum and the Women Interventions for Substance Exposure Curriculum (WISE).

The CHILD curriculum supports the provision of age-appropriate treatment services for children with substance use disorders, while the Recovery Curriculum provides knowledge and skills on peer-led interventions to recovery coaches working in the community. The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity curriculum gives an overview of substance use and health related issues amongst the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI) community and the WISE curriculum aims to address the existing gaps in training for treatment providers working with women to empower those in recovery, and to support others in maintaining their own recovery.

In 2018, a total of 3,300 individuals from 32 countries were beneficiaries of approximately 80 training programs conducted on evidence-based training curricula - an increase of 35% from 2017.

Credentialing for addiction treatment practitioners is offered through The Global Centre for Credentialing and Certification (GCCC) in the form of the International Certification of Addiction Professionals examinations.

As the prime mover in the drug demand reduction (DDR) field, DAP is continually developing new and innovative programs. Currently in-progress is the development of a curriculum for individuals working in the criminal justice system that is Drug Treatment Alternatives to Incarceration for Drug Users curriculum. This curriculum aims to provide policymakers with the necessary tools to design country-specific alternatives to incarceration programs will be ready for dissemination in 2019.

DAP also supports international conferences organized by ICUDDR, Afghanistan Stakeholders Meeting, Prevention and Treatment Expert Advisory Group Meetings that facilitate intellectual discussions among DDR experts field and share current trends in the field.

DAP continues to provide direct technical assistance to about 80 treatment centres in Afghanistan thus enabling about 10,485 individuals to have access to free treatment and aftercare services.

In addition, DAP also supports several outpatient treatment centres in Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Philippines.

Since the launch of ISSUP in 2015, DAP has been supporting the annual International Society of Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Professionals (ISSUP) in the form of concurrent workshops on selected courses of the UPC, UTC, CHILD and WISE, besides the GCC Commission Meeting and credentialing examinations for trained addiction treatment practitioners.

At this year's ISSUP Conference, DAP is once again offering training opportunities to DDR practitioners in the form of concurrent training workshops on the UPC, UTC, CHILD as well as the UTC Refresher Course.

The Colombo Plan through its Drug Advisory Program (DAP) has worked tirelessly over the years on major initiatives on drug demand reduction Programs. Periodically these programs have been reviewed and new initiatives have been introduced to reduce the demand and to step up the efforts.

The Colombo Plan collaborates very closely with ISSUP by providing technical assistance and conducting training programs at ISSUP's annual workshops. As I said before, this year's annual ISSUP workshop will convene here in Vienna and is organized in collaboration with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The Colombo Plan through DAP will be conducting nine concurrent training workshops on its drug use treatment and prevention curricula. All the training workshops will be held in the M building of the UNODC office located in the Vienna International Centre. Please join us at ISSUP to get an understanding of the Colombo Plan's involvement in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building in the field of drug demand reduction.

Having said all this and inspired by the key work done by ourselves in collaboration with our partners, I feel it is obligatory for us to provide and show the right direction to the next generation in what it means to lead a drug free life. To do this we need to mobilize resources and manpower to implement our programs primarily through education, awareness-raising, training and treatment facilities.

We have done a great job! Let us not stop there. Let us move forward to ensure that our children and grandchildren live a healthy life in a safe world.

Thank you.