



**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
MESSAGE TO 22 BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
FOR THE PREVENTION OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
Macau, 14 May 2007**

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It is a pleasure to send greetings to all the participants in this important conference organized by the International Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse.

There are two big misconceptions when it comes to drug control. One is that all the world's drug problems can be solved by eradicating the supply of illicit drugs or seizing all drugs that are being trafficked around the globe. This is necessary but insufficient. As long as there is demand for illicit substances, there will be people willing to supply them and criminals willing to deliver them. The greatest drug control challenge is to reduce demand for drugs.

The second misconception is that drug control should be left to drug experts or governments alone. This, too, is false. Since drug abuse affects us all, we have a shared responsibility to prevent and treat it.

The IFNGO carries out vital work at the community level. In effect, you are strengthening our social antibodies to prevent drug abuse. Indeed, experience and common sense show that parents, peers, educators and employers can play a role in steering people away from drugs. But more support is needed for programmes to strengthen families, improve parenting skills, reduce anti-social behavior among youth, and ensure that adequate treatment facilities are in place. Schools can help by teaching life-skills and discussing with young people the effects of drug use. Health officials, the media, community groups and local governments are important partners in this effort. Greater intervention is also needed to prevent the spread of diseases, like HIV and hepatitis, through drug use.

The IFNGO also plays a constructive role in ensuring that States live up to the commitments they made at the General Assembly Special Session on Illicit drugs in 1998, and in setting the agenda for what further steps will be needed at the end of the ten-year process agreed at that session.

I applaud your efforts, and urge others to heed your message and follow your example. I also urge you to continue to cooperate with other NGOs, Member States and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Together, we can save people from the dangers and misery of drugs. Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference.