

Drugs and Illicit Practices: Assessing their impact on development and governance

10th December 2015, 14:00-15:00, Room C3, Vienna International Centre
(Refreshments will be available from 13:15)

The illicit commerce in drugs remains consistently paradoxical because it defies the categories that have been constructed for a systematic understanding of what it is. Drug traffickers are considered outlaws and ‘outsiders’, yet their very survival depends on remaining as ‘insiders’, with links to local communities, legitimate firms, and government institutions. The presence of illicit commerce is typically interpreted as a sign of state weakness, chaos, and violence. Yet as the case studies in this research have shown, this is not always the case.

The case studies in ChristianAid’s recent report demonstrate that the illicit commerce in drugs could not be explained exclusively in terms of law-like generalisations. Poor households growing the crops, drug traffickers protecting the trade, and law enforcement agencies enforcing eradication rarely anticipate, let alone control, especially in the long term, the outcomes of their plans and decisions. There is a great discrepancy between design and outcome, as manifested by how more than fifty years after the creation of the 1961 Single Convention, ‘well-designed’ plans and programmes for a ‘drugs-free world’ have not delivered on their promise. These case studies call for a more comprehensive review and the discussion of new responses, beyond the narratives on prohibition and legalisation, on the ‘world drug problem’ being debated for the UNGASS in April 2016.

Speakers:

- **Ann Fordham**, Executive Director, International Drug Policy Consortium.
- **Bente Angell-Hansen**, Ambassador, Embassy of Norway in Vienna.
- **Eric Gutierrez**, Senior Adviser on Accountable Governance, Christian Aid.
- **David Mansfield**, Consultant on drugs and development.
- **Jean Luc Lemahieu**, Director, Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, UNODC.
- **Carlos Medina**, Deputy Minister of Criminal Policy and Restorative Justice, Ministry of Justice of Colombia.

To attend, please RSVP to Juan Fernandez at jfernandez@idpc.net.