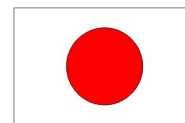


*Permanent Mission of the Russian
Federation to the international
organizations in Vienna*



*Permanent Mission of Japan
to the international organizations
in Vienna*



**UNODC, Japan and Russia launch joint project to assist
Afghanistan in tackling drug trafficking**

18 June 2012, VIENNA. At a presentation that took place at the premises of the Russian Mission to the Vienna-based international organizations, Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Permanent Representatives of Russia and Japan - Ambassadors Vladimir Voronkov and Toshiro Ozawa - inaugurated the launch of a joint project aimed at strengthening the counter-narcotics capacities of the Afghan National Police (ANP).

The main goal of the one-year project is to improve the anti-drug operational capabilities of the ANP by organizing three comprehensive training courses for their officers using the facilities, educational and technical expertise of the Russian Ministry of the Interior Training Centre in Domodedovo (a town near Moscow).

The project is sponsored by the Government of Japan as a part of a broader multi-million financial package for the UNODC's activities for Afghanistan and the region at large. The UNODC will provide the over-all coordination of the project implementation, which will be carried out in the framework of the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries.

“I welcome this joint venture between Japan and Russia to provide counter-narcotics training to police officers. The project is a sign of the shared responsibility that all nations have in seeking to interrupt the flow of illicit drugs from Afghanistan. I hope there will be many more such collaborations between

countries in the future”, - said Executive Director, calling the Russia-Japan joint endeavour a good example for further consolidating efforts of the international community in addressing the Afghan drug problem.

He also stressed the importance of this cooperation to curb the whole spectrum of social and economic challenges in Afghanistan. As was noted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at a high-level Conference of the Paris Pact on combating opiates from Afghanistan held recently in Vienna: “Fighting the drugs trade is essential to our work to reduce poverty and raise standards of human well-being”.

Ambassador Toshiro Ozawa stated that “strengthening the capacity of local police to deal with drug problems will be an important contribution towards realizing peace and stability in Afghanistan”. The Ambassador went on to stress that “commitments of our (Russia and Japan) leaders can and do result in concrete, practical and beneficial outcomes for all” and emphasized that the UNODC is an important partner in the post conflict nation building of Afghanistan.

Ambassador Vladimir Voronkov expressed his gratitude to the Government of Japan for the financial contribution to the project. He emphasized that the project, “which implementation is already a matter of technicalities”, will further facilitate cooperation between the two countries and the UNODC. He also didn't exclude that, when completed, the project's prolongation and/or broadening of scope of participants and provided activities may be negotiated. “Our intention is that the Domodedovo project serves a good starting point for our broad scale cooperation with Afghanistan and Japan under the auspices of the UN, as well as with other stakeholders, within the Regional Programme”.

The first training course under the project is scheduled already for September this year.