

*Draft Concept Paper*  
“International Seminar Workshop on the Implementation of  
United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (UNGPs on AD)

International Conference on Alternative Development 2 (ICAD2)”

**19 – 24 November 2014**

**Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai and Bangkok, Thailand**

## **Background**

Over the past several decades, the international community has recognized the concept of alternative development as an important component of enhancing development in States affected by, or in some cases at risk of, the illicit cultivation of crops used for illicit drug production and manufacture.

A turning point in the United Nations mandate was in 1988 when the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem in 1998 defined alternative development as “*a process to prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotics and psychotropic substances through specifically designed rural development measures in the context of sustained national growth and sustainable development efforts in countries taking action against drugs, recognizing the particular socio-economic characteristics of the target communities and groups, within the framework of a comprehensive and permanent solution to the problem of illicit drugs*”.

Since then, many countries have turned to place importance on a more balanced and comprehensive approach, seeking to address the problem of drugs, drugs- related crimes and social deficits in a sustainable manner, by emphasizing a human-centric development-led approach, empowering marginalized rural communities with improved livelihood opportunities and removing them from the illicit economy over the long-term.

The importance of alternative development has been reaffirmed in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high level review of implementation by Member States of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

The concept of alternative development nowadays has evolved from the context of crop substitution and eradication. It is recognized as an integral part of broader development policies and strategies to foster sustainable crop control strategies, along with other development-oriented measures, including rural development, strengthening local governance and institutions, access to legal market and infrastructure, promoting local community participation and participation of multilateral and bilateral development agencies as well as international financial institutions.

Pursuant to relevant Commission on Narcotic Drug (CND) resolutions<sup>1</sup>, Thailand, together with Peru and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), hosted the International Workshop and Conference on Alternative Development (ICAD) in November 2011 in the provinces of Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, Thailand, which brought together over 100 policy makers, experts, practitioners, members of international organizations, and civil society from all continents to exchange good practices on alternative development to solve the problem of narcotic crop cultivation through alleviating poverty and ensuring sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities.

The international workshop culminated in the drafting of the ‘International Guiding Principles on Alternative Development’. The International Guiding Principles was later endorsed at the High Level International Conference on Alternative Development in Lima, Peru, in November 2012. Later, the International Guiding Principles on Alternative Development was endorsed by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at its fifty-sixth session in March 2013 as the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs on AD), and subsequently by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session in December 2013<sup>2</sup>. The Guiding Principles serve as guidance based on years of good practices and accumulated knowledge on alternative development across regions. Commitment to implementing key guidelines from the UNGPs would result in more effective and sustainable AD programmes in future.

The Government of Thailand will host the second International Workshop and Conference on Alternative Development (ICAD2) in Thailand from 19 to 24 November 2015, in line with CND resolutions 57/1 “Promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development and proposal to organize an international seminar/workshop on the implementation of the Guiding Principles” and 58/4, ‘Promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development’ to move beyond the achievements of the 1<sup>st</sup> ICAD towards broader implementation the UNGPs on AD.

The organization of ICAD2 will mark another important milestone in the context of sustainable development. Given that the United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda will take place in September 2015, ICAD2 will be an opportune time to discuss the mutually reinforcing nature of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and alternative development.

Additionally, as the CND is preparing for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) to be held from 19 to 21 April 2016, deliberations at ICAD2 will also contribute to the substantive discussion within that context, particularly in addressing narcotic crop cultivation and overall livelihood development of target communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) resolutions 52/6 of 20 March 2009; 53/6 of 12 March 2010; 54/4 of 25 March 2011; and 55/4 of 16 March 2012.

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/68/196.

## **Objectives**

- To advance the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development as the progress of implementation
- To underscore the importance of integrating alternative development into larger national and international development policies and strategies aimed at improving the overall livelihood of the target population
- To provide assessment of alternative development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and in preparation for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS 2016)
- To strengthen global alliance on alternative development among key stakeholders, particularly through a trilateral cooperation scheme involving countries with AD experience, donor countries / community and countries interested in initiating AD programmes

## **Participants** / Representative(s) from

- High-level policy makers from Member States' governments
- Practitioners
- International and regional organizations
- International financial institutions (IFIs)
- Civil society and non-governmental organizations
- Academia
- Private sector

## **Outcomes**

- Articulation of commitment by the international community to implement UNGPs to result in more effective AD programmes going forward
- Reaffirmation by key stakeholders of importance of mainstreaming AD as part of broader sustainable development agenda
- Deepened understanding of UNGPs amongst multiple stakeholders and joint identification of key issues related to practical implementation of UNGPs to be further addressed
- Strengthening of existing alliances on AD amongst traditional key players and constructive engagement and cooperation prospects with additional stakeholders (development agencies, IFIs, private sector, emerging countries on AD, global 'thought leaders')

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