

“International Seminar workshop on the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development”

International Conference on Alternative Development 2 (ICAD2)

Chairs’ Summary

Background

Alternative Development (AD) has conceptually and technically evolved through several decades, from “crop substitution” development projects pioneered in Thailand in the 1970s to being fully recognized as one of the 3 pillars of the international community’s balanced approach toward the world drug problem at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem in 1998. To share lessons learned and promote alternative development as one of the viable and sustainable approaches to prevent and eliminate illicit cultivation of crops, the Governments of Thailand and Peru, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), hosted the International Workshop and Conference on Alternative Development (ICAD1) in 2011 and 2012 in the provinces of Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, Thailand, and in Lima, Peru, respectively. The International Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, adopted at the High-level International Conference on Alternative Development in Peru in November 2012, were later on endorsed by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at its 56th session in March 2013 and subsequently adopted as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (UNGPs on AD) by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the United Nations General Assembly at its 68th session in December 2013¹.

The Second International Conference on Alternative Development (ICAD2)

The Royal Thai Government hosted the second International Seminar Workshop and Conference on Alternative Development (ICAD2) on 19-24 November 2015², in collaboration with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with the aims to:

- Promote the implementation of the UNGPs on AD;
- Stress the need to integrate alternative development into national development policies and strategies;
- Discuss alternative development in broader context of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem to be held in April 2016 (UNGASS 2016) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
- Increase political and financial support for alternative development programmes by strengthening global alliances among countries implementing AD programmes, potential international donors and countries interested in initiating AD programmes.

The ICAD2 is organized in 2 parts :

1) Study visit/workshop : 19 – 21 November 2015

Study visit to alternative development projects and workshop in the provinces of Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, Thailand, were led by Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha

¹ A/RES/68/196

² CND Resolution 57/1 and CND Resolution 58/4

Mahidol of Thailand. Participants visited the “Myanmar-Thailand Cooperation on Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Development Project” in Yawng Kha, Mong Hsat District, Shan State, Myanmar, where alternative development project is in an initial stage, focusing on improvement of livelihoods through agriculture, food security, healthcare, education, irrigation and livestock. They also visited the Doi Tung Development Project, administered by the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, and the Nong Hoi Royal Project, administered by the Royal Project Foundation, where alternative development projects have been longstanding and in sustainable stage, with an emphasis on diversification of off-farm income generating activities, post-harvest management and value chain.

2) High-level Conference, Bangkok : 23 – 24 November 2015

The High-level Conference was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Arthayudh Srisamoot, Chairperson of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at its 58th session, with welcome remarks by H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, a video message from H.E. Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC followed by remarks by Mr. Aldo Lale-Demoz, Deputy Executive Director of UNODC, remarks by H.E. Mrs. Marlene Mortler, Federal Drug Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Germany and opening remarks by Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand. Ambassador Khaled Abdel-Rahman Shamaa, Chair of the Board tasked by CND with the Preparations of UNGASS 2016 also briefed the plenary on the preparation of the UNGASS 2016 and how the ICAD2 could contribute to the process.

The Conference included plenary session, which provided opportunity for national statements on the theme “the Implementation of UNGPs on AD : Gaps and Challenges, and recommendations on the way forward: Alternative Development and the Sustainable Development Goals” and 2 panel discussions, as follows :

1) “Rule of Law and Security Challenges in the Development-Oriented Drug Control Context” with Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand, H.E. Mrs. Marlene Mortler, Federal Drug Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Germany and H.E. Mrs. Salamat Azimi, Minister of Counter Narcotics of Afghanistan, as panelists and Mr. Aldo Lale-Demoz, Deputy Executive Director of UNODC, as moderator.

2) “Alternative Development, Sustainable Development Goals and UNGASS 2016: Enhancing Innovation and Impact on the Ground” with H.E. Mr. Khaled Abdel-Rahman Shamaa, Chair of the Board tasked with the Preparation of UNGASS 2016, Mr. Aldo Lale-Demoz, Deputy Executive Director of UNODC, Ms. Pien Metaal, Civil Society Task Force (Transnational Institute) and Mrs. Kesara Manchusree, President of the Thai Stock Exchange, as panelists and Dr. Sandro Calvani, Senior advisor on strategic planning, Mae Fah Luang Foundation, as moderator.

There are 258 participants to ICAD2 from 40 countries around the world, 13 international organizations, academic community and civil society. Among high-level participants were H.E. Mr. Paiboon Koomchaya, Minister of Justice of Thailand; H.E. Mrs. Salamat Azimi, Minister of Counter Narcotics of Afghanistan; H.E. Mr. Masir Anak Kujat, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia; H.E. Maj.Gen. Aung Soe, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of Myanmar; H.E. Mr. Gumercindo Pucho Mamani, Vice Minister of Coca and Alternative Development of Bolivia; H.E. Mrs. Marlene Mortler, Federal Drug Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Germany; H.E. Mr. Kao Khondara, Vice Chairman of National Authority for Combating Drugs of Cambodia; H.E. Mr. Kheuangkham

Inthavong, Vice Chairman of Lao National Commission For Drug Control and Supervision, Laos PDR; Mr. Kinley Dorji, Secretary General of the Colombo Plan Secretariat; Mr. Aldo Lale-Demoz, Deputy Executive Director of UNODC and Mr. Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee, Deputy Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Key conclusions and recommendations

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development serve as an important framework for alternative development. There is no one-size fits all approach to the implementation of alternative development on the ground as it must be adapted to particular local contexts. Alternative development increases state's presence, builds trust between community and government, and, in some cases, promoting peace and culture of lawfulness. Alternative development, as one of the fundamental pillars of the international drug control, is intrinsically linked and complementary to the recently adopted 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as its implementation can contribute and create conditions conducive to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. It is important to mainstream alternative development programmes into national development plans, involving coordination between relevant governmental agencies in order to improve area-based, socio-economic conditions of small farmer communities by providing necessary infrastructure and public services.
2. Alternative development must have an area-based and people-centered approach based on empowerment and ownership of local communities involved in designing and implementing of alternative development programmes. Effective cooperation of all stakeholders, including relevant government agencies, local authorities, local leaders, civil society, private sector, relevant sub-regional, regional and international institutions, international financial institutions and, most importantly, the farmers and communities themselves, in the entire alternative development process, is crucial for the success of alternative development as it would meet the needs of the end beneficiaries, leverages expertise, avoids duplication of services and better utilizes resources.
3. Strong political will towards alternative development principles, well-designed alternative development programmes, long-term commitment to development assistance with flexible funding from governments, international organizations, and donors, and enhanced sub-regional and regional initiatives are some of the key factors that can ensure continuity and sustainability of alternative development programmes.
4. The relationship between alternative development, the rule of law and good governance can be seen as mutually reinforcing and complementary. Security, good governance and the rule of law provide conducive environment for successful alternative development. At the same time, alternative development increases institutional presence, builds trust between community and government, and, in some cases, promotes peace and a culture of lawfulness, which further enhances security and strengthens the rule of law. Therefore, alternative development should be included in further debates and developments in the area of the rule of law.
5. The rule of law empowers communities by providing them knowledge of legal frameworks, access to justice, and understanding of their rights and duties as good citizens of the society.

Communities with alternative development projects can promote rule of law when they have ownership and are responsible for their own development.

6. There is a discrepancy between the broad political endorsement of alternative development internationally and the actual funding supporting its implementation, which, according to the UNODC World Drug Report 2015, represents less than 1% of the global development assistance.
7. The success of alternative development programmes should not only be measured by illicit crop reduction estimates but also by using human development indicators. Increased funding for impact assessments is needed in order to acquire evidence-based data to evaluate the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the programmes. Good quality impact assessment will provide better evidence of alternative development outcome, which could help to engage broader development community and rendering more support to alternative development efforts.
8. The integration of criteria related to environmental sustainability in alternative development programmes is important. Reforestation, water management, reduction of slash-and-burn practices and shifting cultivation and sustainable land use planning in the context of alternative development also support broader environmental conservation.
9. Access to productive land, land rights as well as formal or informal land tenure systems, with the involvement of local communities, must be promoted and protected in the implementation of alternative development programmes to ensure sufficient and sustainable livelihood.
10. Proper sequencing in the implementation of alternative development programmes is necessary to allow smallholder farmers to have access to secured alternative livelihoods prior to eradication of illicit crops, taking into account the transition period between illicit crops cultivation and licit income generating activities.
11. Alternative development programmes should promote diverse livelihood activities and sources of income. It should increase food security, and then progress towards value-adding and marketing activities.
12. There are strong links between market access and sustainability of alternative development programmes. It is crucial to identify market access before implementing alternative development programmes.
13. Alternative development products must be marketable, of high quality standards and competitive in local, regional and, ultimately, international markets. Where applicable, alternative development products should aim to create value-added chains to ensure higher income to target communities in order to support sustainable livelihood and compete with income generated from illicit crop cultivation.
14. Private sector can play a valuable role by sharing innovation, expertise, skills and providing financial and technical supports and marketing assistance for alternative development products.

15. Regional strategies and good practices on alternative development that reflect common and shared circumstances should be encouraged and promoted.
16. Consideration should be given to broaden application of alternative development programmes both in rural and urban areas.
17. Demand reduction interventions should be an integral part of alternative development programmes in illicit crop cultivation areas where there is presence of drug use and abuse.
18. More researches are needed to better understand factors contributing to illicit crop cultivation, taking into account local and regional specificities.
19. There should be an enhanced system-wide coherence and coordination on development and drug control policies amongst all relevant agencies.
