

Addressing Illicit Drug Trade

Canada's Drug Strategy is the federal response to the harmful use of substances. These include illegal drugs, alcohol, pharmaceuticals, inhalants and solvents. The Strategy takes a balanced approach to reducing both the demand for, and the supply of, drugs and substances. It contributes to a healthier, safer Canada through prevention, treatment, enforcement, and harm reduction initiatives.

International Partnerships

Given the global nature of the illicit drug trade, reducing the supply of illegal drugs entering Canada from other countries involves international cooperation, particularly with the United States, given our shared border. Partners in Canada's Drug Strategy work to limit the entry of illegal drugs into Canada; and strive to reduce the smuggling of illegal drugs from Canada to other countries.

Canada is a member state of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and is also a party to three United Nations conventions on drug control. These conventions, list various drugs and other substances, and require all parties to put in place controls monitoring the movement, sale, and use of these substances. Canada meets these control requirements in a number of ways, but primarily through the legislative, and regulatory framework provided by the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.

In addition to these broader international efforts, law enforcement agencies in Canada and the U.S. work together closely to address the illicit drug trade. The Canada – U.S. Cross Border Crime Forum, led by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada and the U.S. Attorney General, is the most prominent of several mechanisms through which the two countries collaborate to improve efforts in addressing this shared problem.

Among other bilateral efforts, Canadian and American intelligence and enforcement officers are deployed to Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETs) in 15 regions along the Canada-U.S. border. IBETs work closely with intelligence units, and are co-located at four sites – two in each country – where Canadian and American officers share information on a daily basis.

Canadian and American officials also worked together in preparing the *2004 United States-Canada Border Drug Threat Assessment* which was most recently published in October 2004, as a useful tool for planning enforcement strategies. This document establishes the facts concerning the cross-border drug trade and emphasizes the continued commitment of Canada and the U.S. to address this mutual problem through increased cooperation.

In addition, in the two years since Canada enacted the *Precursor Control Regulations* to further control the import, export, production and sale of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of illegal drugs, there has been a significant decrease in seizures of these substances at the border. One of many examples of the effectiveness of Canada-U.S. cooperation is Operation Candy Box, executed in March 2004, resulting in the dismantling of a major international organized crime network responsible for the production and trafficking of ecstasy and marihuana in the two countries.

To learn more about Canada's Drug Strategy, please visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cds

Find out what governments, non-governmental organizations, and other partners are doing – National Framework for Action – Visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cds-nfa

