

16 March 2009

## **GLOBAL CO-OPERATION KEY TO REDUCING SCOTLAND'S DRUGS MENACE**

INTERNATIONAL co-operation must be used and alliances strengthened to reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs.

The annual ACPOS drugs conference at Dalmahoy, near Edinburgh, will echo calls for greater global co-operation to combat the economic recession, with a rallying cry for countries and agencies to stand together against the drugs trade - or risk becoming isolated 'victims' of multi-national crime networks.

Over the next two days (17-18 March), around 200 international delegates will hear contributions from Europol, the head of the Dutch National Crime Squad, Community Safety Minister Fergus Ewing, and senior figures from Scottish and UK policing on how they are working together to tackle the harm caused by this cynical and ruthless trade at home and abroad.

The event will also see the publication of a refreshed ACPOS drugs strategy – which stresses the importance of co-operation within local communities, with national partners outside law enforcement, and with agencies in Europe and beyond.

Speaking ahead of the conference, Gordon Meldrum, Director General of the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency and ACPOS lead on drugs, said:

“In recent months, we have all looked on with alarm as the impact of the banking crisis and the economic recession has swept across the globe. That has focused attention on the need for countries to act together in a global alliance to deal with forces that it would appear that no country is capable of managing alone. There are great parallels here for those of us working to stem the harm caused to our communities by drugs.

“For some time now we have been working to broaden the base of our approach to tackling the drugs problem – whether it is in the partnerships that exist within communities, schools, and health services to reduce the demand for drugs, or in the new alliances that we need to forge within the UK, Europe and beyond to disrupt supply.

“Scotland is a small country on the north-west edge of Europe. The drugs that end up in our backstreets have made it here from routes that straddle the continents – from Afghanistan in the case of heroin, and South America in the case of cocaine. Those commodities bring with them a trail of economic, social and political destruction – a continuum of harm – that scars our planet and its people.

“Reducing that harm means that we have to look outside our jurisdictions as well as within for solutions. There is no room for any kind of national policy 'protectionism' about our approaches to drugs. It takes a network to find a network. We need global, cross-border co-operation to gain and share intelligence about the threats we face – and then joined-up action to prevent or intercept those who profit from that harm as close to the source of their operations as possible.

"I think that those of us operating in smaller jurisdictions like Scotland have always recognised that. We have been quick to embrace that partnership approach – for example by placing officers on secondment within Europol. That kind of partnership thinking is also central to the refreshed drugs strategy for Scottish policing that we will be launching at the conference this week.

"In the wake of the economic turmoil we are experiencing, we cannot allow the threat posed by international drug trafficking to be diluted. Long after the problem of 'toxic debt' has passed into history, we will still be faced by dangerous and ruthless gangs who will look to profit from their own brand of 'toxic death'.

"The issue we will all be wrestling with at this year's conference is stark – how can we more effectively stand together to tackle the dealers, and how do we avoid being isolated victims of their international trade.

"We have an array of substantial contributors from home and abroad on that issue over the next two days. We look forward to exchanging ideas and making new connections with them in the pursuit of our objectives – reducing the harm caused to our communities and our economy by drug misuse."

Fergus Ewing, Minister for Community Safety, said: "We are re committed to ensuring our law enforcement agencies have the powers and resources to take on and take down the gangs involved in peddling drugs and despair on our streets - and that means those involved in Scotland, those working elsewhere in the UK or beyond our shores.

"Many of those controlling organised drugs crime in Scotland have never set foot in our country so effective enforcement requires a coordinated global response.

"I am pleased that Scotland's police forces, including the SCDEA, have been so proactive in pursuing those whose distant activities impinge on the lives of so many Scots.

"I also want to welcome the publication today of the refreshed ACPOS drugs strategy. As with our national drugs strategy launched last year, this is founded on the principle of recovery.

"Our police play key roles in both preventative education such as the Choices for Life events, and in helping individuals move towards recovery from problem drug use, through their role in criminal justice interventions such as arrest referral schemes, linked to drug and other treatment services.

"It is only through such extensive and collaborative efforts, across education, health and the justice system that we will effectively tackle the harm caused in our communities by drug misuse."

**-end-**

For further information contact:

David Steele, ACPOS, 0141 435 1240 (07771 842881);

John McCroskie, SPSA, 0141 534 8901 (07702 777283) or

Angela Hughes, SPSA, 0141 534 8962 (07702 141188)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

The conference opens on Tuesday, 17 March at the Marriott Dalmahoy, Kirknewton, Edinburgh EH27 8EB. Media representatives are welcome to attend all sessions of the conference. A programme is set out below.

### **DAY ONE**

1145-1245hrs Lunch on arrival

1300–1310hrs

Welcome and Introduction

**Patrick Shearer**

Chief Constable Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, ACPOS President Elect

1310–1330hrs

Opening Address

**Stephen House**

Chief Constable Strathclyde Police, Chair ACPOS Crime Business Area

1330–1350hrs

An Audience with

**Fergus Ewing**

Minister for Community Safety (facilitated by Alan Douglas)

GETTING TO THE ROUTE OF THE PROBLEM - REDUCING THE SUPPLY

1355–1415hrs

Heroin - The World Picture and the Challenges of Afghanistan

**Les Fiander**

Head of Heroin Unit, Europol

1420–1440hrs

Improving our effectiveness, working with EU partners

**Tom Driessen**

Director, Dutch National Crime Squad

1445–1505hrs

Interagency Cooperation in Transitional Organised Crime

**Tim Manhire**

Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre

1505–1530hrs *Tea/Coffee*

1535–1555hrs

Enforcement in Scotland in 2009 - The Work of The Scottish Police Service and its Partners

**Gordon Meldrum**

Chair, ACPOS Drug Sub-Committee

GETTING TO THE ROUTE OF THE PROBLEM - REDUCING THE HARMS

1600–1620hrs

Protecting Our Communities - Operation League - Operations and Interventions

**Detective Chief Superintendent Stephen Whitelock**

SCDEA

1625–1645hrs

Linking Harm Reduction and Enforcement

**David Blakey**

UK Drugs Policy Commission

1645–1705hrs

Social Reintegration

**Ruth Parker**

Scottish Prison Service

1710–1730hrs Plenary Session

**Alan Douglas**

## DAY TWO

0855hrs Introduction to Day 2 - Getting to the Route of the Problem - Making a Difference

0900–0920hrs

Delivery Reform - The Changing Face of Alcohol and Drug Partnerships

**Joe Griffin**

Scottish Government

0925–0945hrs

Putting the Strategy into Action - The Evolving Role of Non-Custodial Sentences

**Sandy Riddell**

Convener of Association of Directors Social Works Standing Committee on Criminal Justice

0950–1010hrs Overcoming the Harsh Reality

**Reverend John Matthews**

1015–1035hrs

Review of Intensive Support for Families

**Elaine Wilson**

Lloyds TSB PDI

1035–1045hrs

Global Rock - Opportunity to Work in Partnership

**Zoie Golding**

Global Rock

1045–1115hrs Tea/Coffee

1115–1135hrs

Substance Misuse Education

**Dr Claire Monaghan**

Chair of Substance Misuse Education Steering Group, Scottish Government

1140–1200hrs

An Innovative Approach

**Detective Chief Superintendent Allan Moffat**

CSI Coordinator, SCDEA

1205–1220hrs

Shared Responsibility - An Update

**Gareth Rae**

Girvan Academy

1220–1230hrs

Final Remarks and Conference Close

**Gordon Meldrum**

Chair, ACPOS Drug Sub-Committee