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PRESS RELEASE

**ON INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS FOR TREATMENT**

Freetown – On Saturday 26 June, the world will observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking with the theme: "Drugs-Treatment Works."

In his message on this occasion, United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, says one of the most damaging misconceptions about drug use is that it is a permanent problem and that the truth is treatment for drug abuse can work and can restore value and dignity to a person's life. He notes this year's theme "aims to correct this misconception and convey the facts about drug abuse treatment, based on the latest and most reliable evidence and research."

The United Nations Secretary-General states that millions of people worldwide have been directly affected by drug problems --those who are dependent, as well as their families. "Their lives have been disrupted, their health undermined, their education interrupted, their jobs lost, their families broken," he says, adding that people with drug-related problems, and their families and friends, need to know that there is a way out, and that effective help is available in different forms depending on the needs and situation of each individual.

Mr. Annan also notes that policymakers must bear in mind that treatment is a cost-effective way to tackle not only the health and social consequences of drug abuse, but also to reduce the associated costs of medical care, social welfare and criminal justice interventions. "On this International Day against Drug Abuse, I call on everyone to examine and take into account the strong evidence about drug-abuse treatment and its effectiveness," he concludes.

As Sierra Leone joins the world in observing the day, this year's commemoration will be held in the Southern district of Bo. The Secretary-General's message will be broadcast nationwide at 7:15 a.m. by Executive Chairman of the National Drug Control Agency, Mr. Kandeh Bangura, and will be repeated at regular intervals throughout the day. Radio UNAMSIL will carry the ceremony live from Bo.

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