

## Press Release

### **24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD), Yangon, Myanmar, 14-15 October 2003**

Senior officials from ASEAN countries gathered in Yangon for a two-day meeting on drug control cooperation among ASEAN countries. The 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) was held from 14-15 October 2003. H.E. Colonel Tin Hlaing, Minister for Home Affairs cum Chairman of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control of Myanmar addressed the opening ceremony. Altogether over a hundred representatives attended the meeting including representatives from UNODC, Interpol, International Federation of Non-Governmental Organization (IFNGO), Drug Advisory Program (OAP) of Colombo Plan, members of Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community (FANC) Police Drug Liaison Officers based in Bangkok, representatives from the embassies in Yangon and Myanmar Anti-Narcotics Association as observers.

This year's meeting addressed the progress made under the implementation of the decisions and recommendations taken during the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASOD meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 14 to 16 October 2002. The meeting reviewed the proposed workshop/ training and project activities; ASEAN Cooperation and Coordination with Dialogue Partners and relevant Regional Organizations; Coordination and Cooperation between ASOD and Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crimes (SOMTC) in Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking; and the role of ASOD in national and regional policy making issues on Drug Control and Illicit Drug Trafficking Identifying measures and concrete actions for future implementation.

ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters is the forum for ASEAN cooperation in drugs and narcotics control which initially came under the purview of the Meeting of the ASEAN Drug Experts. The meeting of ASOD was first convened in 1976 under the coordination of the Committee on Social Development (COSD). This first meeting formulated recommendations in four major areas: enforcement and legislation; treatment and rehabilitation; prevention and information; and training and research. The meeting also formulated strategies to enhance mutual cooperation for the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration of Principles. It has been over two decades since the 1st Meeting was held. The annual meeting was renamed as the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) in 1984.

ASOD mandate includes:

1. enhancing the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration of Principles to Combat the Abuse of Narcotics and Drug;
2. consolidate and strengthen collaborative efforts in the control and prevention of drug problems in the region;
3. bring about the eventual eradication of narcotic plants cultivation in the region; and
4. design, implement, monitor and evaluate all ASEAN programmes of action in drug abuse prevention and control.

The annual meeting is held alphabetically among the member countries and the next meeting will be held in the Philippines in October 2004.