The trafficking of heroin is a crucial component of urban politics and development in East and Southern Africa. The heroin economy has shaped the growth of small coastal villages, border towns and megacities along the Southern Route – a network moving Afghan drugs south across the Indian Ocean and onward through Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique to South Africa. Rapid and dysfunctional urbanisation, the migration of low-skilled youth throughout the region, unemployment and the inability of local governments to cope with service delivery needs have contributed to the spread of the drug, building fortunes for a few 'big fish' and promoting corruption among police and politicians.

This presentation will present the findings of a report which analysed case studies of how heroin markets developed in 18 towns and cities, ranging from megacities to border towns, across East and Southern Africa.

Chair of the panel:
Andreea Schmidt, Global Illicit Flows Programme Manager, European Commission

Panelist:
Simone Haysom, Senior Analyst, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime

Debates about drug policy often revolve mainly around questions of crime and law enforcement, or look at illicit drug economy phenomena from a strict development perspective. However, bridging this gap could provide valuable analytical and practical hints to address drug issues.

The Drugs & Development Hub is a newly established platform for discussions between academics, policy makers and affected communities involved in illicit drug cultivation, production and/or trafficking, or who have transitioned beyond it. It seeks to create greater awareness about the links between drugs, crime and development in order to gain a more holistic understanding of current phenomena surrounding illicit drug economies. The Hub was inaugurated during a workshop and public event in Bogotá, Colombia, from 27-28 January 2020.

This side event introduces the “Drugs and Development Hub” and gives insights into some of the questions and ideas it highlights.

Opening Remarks:
Angela Me, Chief of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Panelists:
Dr. John Collins, Executive Director of the International Drug Policy Unit at the London School of Economics (LSE)
Daniel Brombacher, Head of the Global Partnership on Drug Policies and Development (GPDPD) at GIZ GmbH
Ian Tennant, Fund Manager, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime

Moderation:
Kristiina Kangaspunta, Chief of the Crime Research Section, UNODC

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