

Report
2018 Global Day of action
Date 09th August 2018,
The Gambia

Background:

Student for Sensible Drug policy (SSDP) Gambia chapter through the support from the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) in collaboration/ partnership with African Network for Information and Action against Drug (RAID-THE GAMBIA) and National Drug Law Enforcement agency (DLEAG) commemorate the global day of Action at North Bank Region, NBR on August 9, 2018.

As June 26 set aside for Global day of action, SSDP- Gambia chapter celebrated the global day of action on August 09, 2018 at the north Bank Region to seek public opinion and seek political and community support on drug policy reform in the Gambia. Celebrating the global day on August 09, 2018 was due to delay of fund to RAID- the Gambia hence we intend to partner.

However, the celebration brought together over 65 participants ranging from youth organizations and regional youth coordinators, students, members of civil society organizations, politicians, and security institutions such as Police, Immigration, narcotic officer, state intelligent service and media.



Proceedings of the program

Opening session:

Welcome remark: Chairman Kerewan Area Council

The chairman of Kerewan Area Council, Mr. Malamin Bojang welcome the participants to his region, he said the event is timely as many young people are engage in drug use and its cost on government to cater for the health expenditure of all those affected. Mr. Bojang Noted that if people are aware of the dangers, the tendency of them start using drug will be minimal. He thank RAID-the Gambia, SSDP- Gambia chapter and partners who have collaborated to ensure that, the program is successful and is held in the region of North Bank. The Chairman finally welcome participants to his region.



Key note Address – Commanding Officer –DLEAG North Bank Region

The Officer Commanding (OC) of DLEAG for North Bank Region, Mr. Yankuba Sanneh, said on behalf of his Regional Commissioner, he thank all participants for honoring the invitation despite other engagements. He said the Drug law enforcement Agency was established in 2003 and mandated by the drug control act to regulate all illicit drugs issues in the Country. Mr. Sanneh said, the objective of drug control law is to make our society free and safe. He added that, they are normally faced with challenges in their operation but, the message he always wanted to pass across is that, they are not enemies, they are part of

the people and they want to ensure that people are safe because those found wanting or victims are either their brothers, sisters, aunty, mother or fathers.

The OC noted that section 70 of the drug control act give them the mandate to enter and search for any suspect's house or premises to search for evidence and therefore he will want participants to be clear with the misconception of why are they entering without their permission.

He thank the participants and urge them to listen well for successful deliberations.

Statement by Chairman –Board of Directors –RAID-the Gambia:

Mr. Tamba S. Kinteh, the chairman Board of Directors of RAID-the Gambia, thank members of the high table and the participants for coming, he said 26th June is set aside by united nations to commemorate the world no drug day and this year theme as many can see is, “**Listening to Children and youths is the first steps to support them grow healthy and safer**” Mr. Kinteh said, addiction is a problem as those addicted waste not only financial resources of their people but, also their time and materials resources. Mr. Kinteh said the importance of the session cannot be over emphasize as bringing together the caliber of participants to interact and discuss way forward is important. He said there will be various presentations on the situation of drugs in the Gambia, the needs for drug policy reform and the objective of SSDP Gambia chapter is important.



Opening statement – Representative of the Governor –North Bank Region

Mr. Kemo Gassama, representative of the Governor of North Bank region, thank RAID-the Gambia and partners for engaging the office of the Governor on the preparation of this event and invite the Governor to give the opening statement. Mr. Gassama said the Governor is extending his greetings to SSDP, RAID- the Gambia and the entire participants from different works of life.

He noted the issue of drugs and it require holistic approach said by him, as it have both health, economic and social impact and thus it's important to have a multi sectoral collaboration. He added that many young people fall victims on drugs issues and they are the cream of the society and thus, there is a need for continues engagement with young people across the country.

Mr. Gassama officially opened the program on behalf of the regional governor of north Bank region and wish the facilitators and participants a successful deliberations and discussion.

Presentations

Drugs situation in the Gambia

Mr. Aba Jatta, DLEAG, Drug demand reduction and public relation unit- said DLEAG is an autonomous institution mandated to regulate all drugs (illegal) issues as per drug control act 2003. Mr. Jatta said drug is in two form, illicit and licit drugs and their office is mandated to regulate illicit ones. He added that, the issue of drug in the Gambia in the 1990 was under the responsibility of a unit at the Gambia police force and then the first drug laws were in the 1991 and 1993 and then the drug control act came thereafter in 2003 that give the formal mandate for drug control council and then the drug law enforcement agency.

Mr. Jatta said that, the 2003 act was amended in 2009, 2010 and 2013 respectively, he added that the act is currently under review to strengthen some of the key part on drug demand reduction as recommend by united nation. He further noted that, section 15 subsection 1 give the mandate to their office to advice the minister on the drug related matters in the Gambia. Mr. Aba also gave statistic on the number of drugs seizure per years from 2012 to 2017, he said looking at the number it means, the drugs trafficking and usage is increasing the Gambia.



Presentation on the objective of SSDP –Gambia Chapter



Mr. Karamo Conteh, the Founder and Chapter Leader of SSDP Gambia Chapter introduced SSDP to over 65 participants in North Bank Region. He presented on the overall history, objective, values and mission statement of SSDP.

In his Introduction, Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP) is the only international network of students and young people dedicated to ending the war on drugs. He said SSDP is a grassroots organization, led by a student-run Board of Directors. According to Mr. Conteh, SSDP create change by bringing young people together and creating safe spaces for students and young people of all political and ideological stripes to have honest conversations about drugs and drug policy

He stated his mission as to mobilize and empower young people globally to participate in the political process, pushing for sensible policies to achieve a safer and more just future.

He conclude and finalize his presentation by saying SSDP promote youth civic engagement as a critical tool in reforming drug policy. He conclude that, the overall objective of SSDP is to develop leaders who advocate for policy changes/ reforms based on justice, liberty, compassion, and reason.

