The Committee on Drug Abuse
On 12.5.2009 I was privileged to be appointed by the Knesset Speaker and confirmed by the Knesset House Committee az Chairman of the Committee on Drug Abuse.

www.knesset.gov.il

The Committee Site:

Committees – Special Committees - Committee on Drug Abuse
The Drugs Ordinance does not provide an adequate response to the frequent changes that take place in the market of designer drugs; dozens of new substances appear each year as “drug alternatives”; these substances have similar effects to existing drugs, but due to minor changes in their chemical structure, are not included in the Drugs Ordinance. This phenomenon has increased over the past five years, thus creating a need, in the opinion both of the courts and of the Chair of the Knesset’s Labour and Welfare Committee, for a fundamental change in legislation.

Israel’s Drugs Ordinance is perceived as generic, applying to those substances whose names appear in the first addendum to the Ordinance, as opposed to the analogue laws customary in many other countries. In those countries, the law also applies, by means of a specific inclusive clause defining this, to other substances not specifically mentioned.

One of the conclusions of the Estlin Committee, set up by a decision of the Committee on Psychoactive Substances that were presented in May 2009, was that there is a need for a change in legislation, so that even substances not specifically prohibited in the Ordinance, will be prohibited, by virtue of their being chemical analogues of prohibited materials.

It is proposed to implement the recommendation of the Committee by initiating the process of changing the Israeli Drugs Ordinance to include analogues; by expanding the specific clause that appears at the end of each section so that it will also include the analogues; in the initial stage it is proposed to implement the new clause on the following substances: amphetamines, methamphetamines, cathinone, methacathinone, and BZP.
Mr. Speaker,
The Director General of the Israel Anti-Drug Authority, students and distinguished guests,

We have gathered here today to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (due to take place on 26/6/2009 this year), in order to raise the question of the importance of the parents’ status in the eyes of their children and the parents’ duty to be involved in everything related to the education of their children, for the sake of a better future.

As the Chair of the Committee on Drug Abuse, I am pleased that the Knesset is marking this day appropriately on the agenda of the Knesset Plenum.

This year, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking focuses on the place of the parents in the lives of their children. They are at centre stage; it is they who have to educate the children and to be there for them and with them.

And parents do indeed have the most important role to play for it is our duty to raise our children wisely; they are humanity’s major asset, the next generation.

It is no secret that all parents, throughout the world, want their children to be successful, to be healthy, and to have all the good things in life.
Some parents devote their whole lives to ensuring that their children achieve this, but, unfortunately some shrug off parental responsibility and the child is lost in a vacuum.

Parents do everything they can to make their children happy and try to give their children the appropriate tools for their healthy development so that they will acquire the right values and the ability to choose the path that will ensure satisfaction, happiness and prosperity.

Every parent wants his children to do well, even if the parent himself is an arch criminal, he too wants his child to do better and have a better life, even though the criminal is unable to educate him and is certainly not a good role model.

Education must take place through dialogue that will arouse the child to think and develop in a healthy and free way.

We must prepare the child for the adult world where they will want to be productive and contribute to society.

There must be compatibility between the adult world and the world of the child. The child must see that his parents and teachers are preparing him for the adult world, but that they too are undergoing the same process as the little children and are serving as examples.

The child should not feel cut off from adult society, or feel that the adults are giving him something artificial.

Israel’s decision makers must supply the education and information systems with tools just as they do the law enforcement system, in order to clean our society of the poison of drugs.

We, Members of the Knesset, are currently in the midst of debates on the State budget; in fact we are deciding our society’s priorities in general for the coming two years.

Social sensitivity and a commitment to the education system and to the needs of the future generation is not merely the lip service that the elected officials
should pay; all the Members of Knesset must make every effort – without distinction between faction or point of view – to work within the framework of the budget debates in order to focus on investment in education and on defending the younger generation.

The budget of 11 million NIS which is in the budget proposal for the Israel Anti-Drug Authority does not even reach one third of the sum actually needed, which is 25 million NIS, in order to provide responses and solutions to advance the battle against drugs and alcohol.

We need to build a society where each child feels suitably and positively committed to himself, to his family and to society, where the child is sensitive to society.

We, the parents, have the duty to educate, in cooperation with the school, and to be involved in all areas of our children’s lives.

People receive much of their education from the environment. A good environment reinforces the education given by the parents. There must, therefore, be a correspondence between the values of the environment and the education received at home.

We must not ignore the fact that man himself influences the environment and that the environment influences him, that we live in a world that is a small global village where mutual dependence is a reality.

It is our duty to explain to the children how human nature works, in order to help the child to understand life and to find his place in society, to belong, to be productive and to bring benefit to society rather than exploiting it.

We, as parents, must give our children the correct conditions for their development, so that the environment too will help form him to accept others, to treat everyone equally and to love his fellow, for egalitarian relations between nations that will find expression in the relations between us and in a correct attitude to nature.

Only if we fulfill our duty as parents to educate, and if we invest all our efforts in education, I am sure we will solve all the problems of drugs and
alcohol, since our children will receive the meaning of life and will want to live in harmony with each other and with nature and as a result all the problems of society will be solved and we shall ensure a better future for our children.
Address by MK Mohammad Barakeh,
Chair of the Knesset Committee on Drug Abuse
at the Education Ministry Conference (Ofi)
at the Weizman Institute – June 2009

Dear students and distinguished guests,

I am pleased to have the privilege, as Chair of the Knesset Committee on Drug Abuse, to open the Ofi Conference that deals with coping and development through dialogue. I support this approach for I see in education the main solution to the problems of drugs and alcohol abuse.

Drugs and alcohol have been known for thousands of years, but never before have people had the need to suppress their feelings of helplessness, and they were never a real existential threat to humanity, as they are today.

The human race has developed a lot during the course of its history but now human development has reached an era where knowledge has expanded beyond all boundaries, in technology, culture, economics and communications. It seems as though there is no barrier that man has not broken through. Yet despite all the enormous abundance in the world today, people can find themselves in a state where they cannot find satisfaction despite all this enormous richness.

In an age where progress may be accompanied by feelings of emptiness and lack of gratification, some choose to cut themselves off from this reality through the use of alcohol and drugs or even to commit suicide.

Despite all the efforts that have been invested in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse, we are still far from removing these problems from our lives. The ever growing use of drugs is not only a social problem but, first and foremost, a personal tragedy for every new addict.
For me, the chief challenge is to bring about a significant reduction in the numbers of users and of addicts.

Research findings show that the use of drugs, alcohol, nargilas and cigarettes
begins at an early age and that the environment has a very significant influence.

The use of drugs and alcohol harms not only the individual when he is actually taking the drug, but causes severe damage to his intellect, his social standing and can destroy his family, harm him financially and cause damage to his social environment.

We are witness to a horrifying deterioration from day to day among children, both Jews and Arabs, who are harmed by alcohol and drugs because they feel lost, as they search for meaning in their lives.

The children face helplessness and unhappiness. Life offers them everything, but this very abundance unsettles them. They feel that nothing can fill the emptiness inside them.

For some, their reality is seen as a place they can no longer bear, and they choose to escape into another reality that is false illusion (where pain and suffering disappear, even if only for a short time, but during that time they feel free, without worries, truly in another world).

We need to help those children and youth to find meaning in their lives, to find their way, to help them find their place in society, so that they feel needed and useful.

I was pleased to read on the Ministry of Education site, that you believe that children can serve as a lever to influence their peers and I want to commend the leaders of the programme for making wise use of our human assets, our children and youth.

The natural law, that education is carried out by the environment and that children can teach other children provides a wonderful tool, for everyone wants to be popular, and will therefore do anything to be liked by his social group.

Thus the crucial influence of children on other children will enable the environment to organize them and will not allow everyone to do whatever they feel like, because the price they will have to pay is rejection by their
environment and no child will tolerate that.

In light of all this, the natural solution is rooted in education, it is important to open a new horizon for each person so that he sees there is something to live for.

A person receives his education from the environment. The environment can shape the child and build him up, or on the contrary, destroy him. We must therefore, build a society where each pupil feels committed to himself, to his family and to the society in a good and correct way – for the child will be sensitive to the reactions of the society around him.

Schools were established for children, they are our riches and they are the principal factor. Therefore we must create the conditions so that the child wants to be in the school environment, as it was in Ancient Greece, for example, and not because he has to be there.

The school must help the child construct the full glory of his human nature and must provide him with tools so that he knows who he is and what he is, so that he understands the nature of human society, how he must change in order to understand the meaning of life, and not to escape to alcohol and drugs out of despair.

We must give the children basic knowledge so that they understand what a human being is and the reality of the global village that consists of a network of mutual dependence between us and between countries.

We must teach them how to relate to each other, how to understand each other, how to connect with each other, so as to give them the tools to deal with problems in a healthy way and to deal with the need to belong. Each one should feel a sense of belonging in society, so that society will be important to him and he will know how to act within a network of relationships of mutual dependence and will want to play his part.

We must teach them about our relationship with nature, what there is in nature, what are the systems that operate our world, and what is the price of disregarding our natural resources.
We must teach him how he has the ability to change himself for the better and then he will have a better understanding of what happens in the world and in nature, and will find that there is equal opportunity – children explaining to children, everyone speaking frankly and on an equal level, since they all sit as equals with each other.

We must give all our attention to the education of our children and to creating the environment where the children spend their time day by day.

Schools are supposed to educate the children in cooperation with the parents and to explain to the children how human nature works, so as to help the child to find his way in life and to find his place in society, so that he will be creative and useful to society instead of exploiting it negatively.

Few people truly relate to the question of why there is a problem of drugs, alcohol, despair and even suicidal tendencies in all societies and countries.

I want to tell you, that the source of all the problems is in society, in an environment that encourages social gaps, competition and exploitation and the results are clear to us all – lack of tolerance, disrespect, recklessness, seeking achievements at the expense of others, while our children sink into despair, alcohol and drugs.

Education should be carried out through dialogue that will stimulate the child to think and to develop in a healthy and free way.

Our education lacks a vital element – education for mutual tolerance and mutual respect. Today there are gaps. No one in education today has found the magic formula for how to overcome all the gaps in society and between peoples, but there is no doubt that it must involve a combination of material capital (budgets, etc.) with human capital.

We all need that part that unites us without distinction of sex, nationality, culture, etc.

We live here, Jews, Arabs, and we are all negligent in preserving our natural resources and in our education we lack [the knowledge] of how to teach the children to relate correctly to the rich resources of nature. We are all witness
to the serious shortage of water, to pollution, to the enormous waste which has results from a careless approach.

We ignore the fact that man himself influences the environment and that the environment influences him.

In the final analysis, all this results from the lack of equality between people and the absence of equal opportunity.

If we invest all our efforts in education I am sure that we shall eliminate all the problems of drugs and alcohol, for our children will understand the meaning of life and will want to live in harmony with each other and with nature and as a result of this all the problems of society will be resolved.

Everything will be resolved if each child is born into the correct conditions for his development, where the environment which will shape them so that they will accept each other, relate to everyone on an equal level, and love their fellows, relating equally between peoples, all this will be expressed through the relations between us and a correct attitude to nature.

I am sure that then all the problems of society will be solved and even the budgetary problem.

I am convinced that we will work in cooperation and invite you to regard the Committee I head as leverage to promote the issue of education.

Let us build a society where the “meaning of life” is not found in Coca Cola [Translator’s note: this refers to Coca Cola’s Hebrew advertising slogan “The taste of life” using a word which can also mean “the meaning of life” or “the point of life”], and certainly not in the coca leaf as the source of cocaine for example, but where the “drug of life” will be found in the heart of each child who seeks self-development and will have a sense of unlimited inner freedom.
Research Study: a third of young Israelis are “trying to find themselves”

30% of young Israelis are looking for a meaning to their lives – according to a study presented yesterday at Bar-Ilan University. According to the findings of the study, many of those young people, aged 20-30, choose to go to India, since it is particularly easy to avoid making decisive choices there.

The study, carried out recently by Prof. Shmuel Shulman of Bar Ilan University was presented yesterday at the conference: “The Rush to India as a metaphor”. These people are drawn to India because it is appropriate to a state of indecision and of fixation”, said Prof. Shulman yesterday. “India offers a certain opening, an expectation that something will happen and things will sort themselves out. When [these young people] talk of their characteristics they mention self criticism so severe that it becomes negative. For example, a person who has an anxiety attack from fear of getting married. Nobody can ever promise him/her that “everything will work out”. The doubts and continual self examination prevent him/her from moving forward. A person like this finds refuge in a place like India.”

According to a survey presented at the Conference, about 55% of the students who traveled in the Far East before beginning their studies reported that they used drugs. About 30% of them decided to use them for the first time during their trip. The survey, carried out among some 7000 students from 12 institutes of higher education in Israel, were presented by Dr. Rachel Bar-Hamburger from Bar Ilan University.

Yael Levy
INCB Mission to Israel

Welcome

Knesset Committee on Drug Abuse

November, 2009
The Committee on Drug Abuse is one of the most important committees in the Knesset.

Committee Chairman: MK Mohammad Barakeh
Comprehensive treatment of the drug and alcohol problem in Israel.

Supervision of all authorities that deal with drug and alcohol abuse or its consequences - including law enforcement, the judiciary, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

Problems deriving from drug addiction.

Use of illicit drugs for medicinal purposes.

Other drug and alcohol related issues.

Judiciary, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

Israel.

IADA takes an integral part in the Committee’s meetings.

Functions
Ministry of Health and IADA, Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services' National Response to drug addicts through the services - annual meeting.

Drug seizure by police, customs, IDF, prison services - annual meeting.

National Police policy in the war against drugs - annual meeting.

Israel National Police policy in the war against drugs - annual meeting.

National response to drug addicts through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, Ministry of Health and IADA.

Overview of IADA's efforts in the war against drugs, annual meeting.

Committee's agenda:

Selected issues on the
Drug abuse in the IDF – annual meeting.

IADA’s budget.

The Knesset and several MKs, 26/6/09, in the presence of the Speaker of the Knesset and several MKs.

Special Assembly to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, 26/6/09, in the presence of the Speaker of the Knesset and several MKs.

Parental involvement and responsibility.

Treatment of youth addicted to drugs.

Continuation
Selected issues on the Committee's agenda:

- Mandatory treatment for addicts: Whether or not and how.
- Drug courts and the need to expand them in Israel.
- Minimum sentences for drug dealers.
- Prevention in schools - IADA and Ministry of Education's joint project.

Continuation...
Visits to several TCs around the country.

Forensics Unit Laboratory.

Smuggling situation in the southern border.

Israel-Egypt border – an overview of the drug smuggling due to hallucinogenic or mind-altering drugs.

Kfar Izun” – TC for Youth Returning from backpacking journeys abroad, suffering mental imbalance due to hallucinogenic or mind-altering drugs.

East Jerusalem.

Visit to treatment services for addicts in Customs Anti-Drugs and Money Laundering Unit - Ben Gurion Airport and Ashdod Port.

Committee Selected study visits.
I want never-ending pleasure because that’s my nature. If something’s important for me I run till I’m worn out, with a strong will.

What is the drug of life???
The Committee on Drug Abuse
to find the drug of life –
that’s what drives me.

To find the drug of life –
that’s what drives me.

It is one’s will that creates thought . . .
The more important you think something is,
the greater your efforts –
You give your whole self to achieve the supreme goal

I always want to feel pleasure, That’s all I ever want, And I really hate not feeling pleasure; I don’t want that at all, Because that’s the source of suffering and so I always reject it

You are young, and want to find pleasure that will never ever end, You feel that you want it and have to try,
To be like everyone else
part of the crowd,

to be liked – to be popular

to be liked – to be popular
(continue)
To be liked – to be popular
to be loved,
you want to be free and happy
and you seek happiness . . .

and you seek happiness . . .

and you seek happiness . . .
You want to free yourself from the chains of self and depart on a wonderful journey to uncover the meaning of life and to feel exalted.

Choose the best path for you
The most worthwhile path for you

For the drug of life is to seek and find the meaning and purpose of life
Drugs are not the meaning of life!!!

The Committee on Drug Abuse