Office of National Drug Control Policy

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, July 11, 2011

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Readout of Discussions between U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy and Italian Government;
Countries Sign Drug Policy Agreement

For more information on national efforts to reduce drug use and its consequences visit www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.

Washington, D.C.—Today, ONDCP Deputy Director David Mineta for Demand Reduction and Sen. Carlo Giovanardi, Italian Under Secretary of State for Family, Drugs, and Civil Service, signed a Memorandum of Intent designed to increase collaboration between the United States and Italy on an array of drug policy issues. The signing was just one part of the two day bilateral consultations between the United States and Italy on drug prevention, treatment, research, law enforcement, and international cooperation. The Italian delegation also met with representatives from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

During the discussions, representatives of both nations emphasized strong support for balanced and humane drug policies and rejected the route of drug legalization. The United States and Italy believe that balanced strategies which provide public health interventions for drug users, alternatives to incarceration for low-level drug offenders, and stiff penalties for drug kingpins is the only way to address the issue of drug use and its consequences. "The United States strongly supports demand reduction and leads the world in funding drug treatment, screening, and scientific research on best practices," said ONDCP Deputy Director Mineta. "But we know," he continued, "that limiting access to illegal drugs is a vital part of supporting recovery and reintegration of individuals with substance use disorders. It was heartening to hear that this approach is also one shared by the Government of Italy. Today's consultations with senior policy officials and experts from Italy was extremely productive, and we look forward to continued collaboration in the future."

The Memorandum of Intent signed today by the United States and Italy will:

- Promote scientific exchanges between public health research institutes in the United States and Italy to support drug prevention, treatment, recovery, and re-integration;
- Facilitate closer collaboration on the full range of drug policies and ensure the regular exchange of best practices information between appropriate agencies in each government; and
- Commit to communicating in international forums the importance of evidence-based, balanced, and humane drug policies.

Read the Memorandum of Intent (English | Italian).

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