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Chairman: Ms. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe)
(Vice-Chairman)

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AGENDA ITEM 108: INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO COMBAT DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING (continued)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Zindoga (Zimbabwe), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 6.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 108: INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO COMBAT DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. D, A/45/495, A/45/535, A/45/536, A/45/542, A/45/652 and Add.1, A/45/301, A/45/303, A/45/329: A/C.3/45/4 and E/1990/39/Add.1)

1. Miss BOTERO (Colombia) noted that there had been an increase in drug trafficking, in the number of drugs and narcotics on the world market and in the variety of narcotics available to consumers. Cheap druqs had become more accessible on the world market, drug-related violence and crime had shown a sharp upturn, as had the degree of corruption linked to drugs, while the profits made from money laundering and the wealth acquired by the international drug cartels continued to increase. Colombia had continued its struggle against all those evils, and although many people believed that its economy was helped by drug trafficking, the opposite was true: the battle waged against the drug traffic cost $US 1 billion a year in security expenses and material losses suffered as the result of the activities of the cartels. Colombia was not seeking handouts since, as its President had said more than once, it had a strong, stable economy and only wantod markets open to its exports. The roots of the drug problem were basically economic. Coca-producing countries were highly dependent on that crop because it was highly attractive in terms of price and costs, For that reason, the measures taken to solve the problem could not all be repressive although it was also necessary to remove the economic incentives of people engaged in illicit drug trafficking.

2. When a criminal activity was also a th iving business, the likelihood was that fewer people would engage in the activity if it ceased to yield profits, Drug trafficking could undoubtedly be curbed by reducing drug consumption and severely punishing those who made it possible. The drug cartels knew that Colombians would not relax until drug trafficking had been eliminated.

3. Colombia was reforming its judicial system in order to enhance its effectiveness as the main tool in the struggle: however, it could not win the battle on its own. International solidarity needed to find practical expression in action, and the strengthening of all judicial, legal and police systems was important to the success of measures to prevent the illegal diversion of arms and explosives for use in illicit drug trafficking and to ensure that the international financial system was not used for money laundering and that chemicals were not channelled into the illegal manufacture of narcotics and psychotropic substances. In connection with the latter point, her delegation wished to reiterate its support for an international conference on the production and distribution of chemicals used for such purposes.

4. Her delegation attached the greatest importance to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action adopted at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly and containing a package of Policies for execution by States and

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(Miss Botero, Colombia)

by the United Nations, *in* which the link between the drug problem and development was recognised. She drew attention in particular to paragraphs 38 and 34 *of* the Programme of Action.

5. The time had come to go beyond rhetoric into the realm of practical action, The United Nations constituted a hub of concerted action at the multilateral level and should play a leadership role in combating drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The restructuring of drug control activities within the United Nations was of fundamental importance first because the existing units needed to be co-ordinated in order to avoid duplication of work and resources and secondly, because drug trafficking was a problem which cut across national borders and had to be dealt with by an efficient body capable of taking integrated action. Her delegation was grateful for the report of the Secretary-General on the enhancement of the efficiency of the United Nation:; structure for drug abuse control (A/45/652) and supported his proposal to create a drug control programme under one head, in the belief that that would promote consistency and co-ordination in the implementation of policies,

6. It also believed that the new United Nations international drug control programme should give maximum priority to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action. One useful proposal made by the Group of Experts which had assisted the Secretary-General with regard to the enhancement of the efficiency of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control related to the establishment of an advisory group to assist the head of the new structure in the mobilization and use of voluntary contributions for operational and technical assistance activities.

7. The delegation of Colombia was convinced that the time was ripe for action. The response of the international community to the act of aggression perpetrated by Iraq demonstrated the possibilities of concerted international action. Such action could be taken to eliminate drug trafficking.

8. Mr. VANNAVONQ (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that world events, including the ending *of* the cold war, *in* the past 18 months had produced tremendous hope and a relaxation *of* tension. His delegation noped that those positive trends would help in the settlement of the basic problems affecting humanity, in particular the highly complex problem of drug abuse, which was by no means confined to a *few* countries and affected all strata of society. In some parts of the world, powerful drug cartels had instituted a reign of terror and corruption, and the international community had met many times to exchange views and attempt to find lasting solutions to the problem.

9. Most recently the seventeenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly, devoted to the question of international co-operation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution *of* narcotic drugs and the World Ministerial Summit to Reduce the Demand for Drugs and to Combat the Cocaine Threat showed the importance attached by the international community to the problem of drug addiction, and its feeling that it could be eradicated only through joint national and international efforts, His delegation felt that the struggle against

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(Mr. Vannavong, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

drugs could succeed only through the simultaneous reduction of both supply and demand. Countries participating in the production, transit and consumption of drugs and the laundering of money derived from illicit drug trafficking should make a concerted effort to co-operate closely in combating the drug scourge.

10. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was a developing country affected by the drug problem. Poppies were grown by ethnic minorities in remote areas, which were difficult to reach. The Government had resolved to reduce the production of opium gradually and had adopted a two-pronged strategy for that purpose. First, it had campaigned energetically to convince the ethnic minorities to abandon the cultivation of poppies in favour of alternate crops. In that connection, it had signed a co-operation agreement with UNDP and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) governing an integrated rural development project and a similar agreement and a memorandum on co-operation in the field of narcotic drugs with the United States. In addition, it had sent officials to a seminar on crop substitution and received delegations from UNFDAC, Sweden, Japan and the United States to discuss the drug problem.

11, As a feature of the second prong of its approach, it had strengthened the laws and repressive measures relating to illicit drug trafficking in the country. As a result of that effort, government agents had dismantled two laboratories producing heroin in the northern part of the country. A national committee for the control and suppression of narcotic drugs had been established, and a new penal code imposing severe sanctions on drug traffickers had entered into force. Over 300 kilograms of drugs and drug-production equipment had been seized and publicly burned. Drug education seminars for customs agents and police officers had also been held.

12. His country subscribed fully to General Assembly resolution 44/141 and to the Global Programme of Action adopted at the seventeenth special session, It felt there was enough political will in the international community in respect of the elimination of drug abuse and trafficking but that the task could not be accomplished by will alone. Sufficient expertise and technical and financial resources were also needed. Although the United Nations had a crucial role to play in co-ordinating national and international efforts in that regard, the anti-drug crusade should be conducted with full respect for national and local conditions. It should not be used to serve political ends or as an excuse for intervening in the internal affairs of any country. His country was prepared to continue its co-operation with UNFDAC and with all countries concerned with finding a solution to the drug problem.

13. Mr. KHALIL, (Egypt) said that his delegation commended the work done by the group of intergovernmental experts set up to help the Secretary-General prepare the report requested of him in General Assembly resolution 44/142 and supported all its recommendations as contained in document A/45/535, particularly the recommendation that the Secretary-General should undertake an analytical study to establish and quantify the link between illicit drug trafficking and external debt and all the

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(Mr. Khalil, Egypt)

recommendations relating to money laundering. It also called on all Member States to co-operate with the proposed expert group to undertake a detailed study on the social consequences of drug abuse and illicit traffic, It further commended the Division of Narcotic Drugs for producing a booklet in English, French and Spanish to help schoolteachers to make an effective contribution to the prevention of drug abuse. In that connection, he said he hoped the booklet would also be translated into Arabic.

14. His Governmunt was grateful for all the activities undertaken in Egypt by UNFDAC and the Division of Narcotic Drugs to combat the demand for drugs and to suppress illicit trafficking. Egypt was pleased to make a token annual contribution to the Fund to indicate its resolve to support United Nations activities in that field. In June 1980 it had hosted, in co-operation with the Division of Narcotic Drugs, the third meeting of heads of national drug law enforcement machinery in Africa, As the first country in Africa to establish an office to deal with the problem of drug abuse und trafficking, Egypt had always made its expertise available to other African and Arab States.

15. His delegation shared the Secretariat's concern regarding the lack of adequate resources to cope with drug abuse and trafficking, especially in view of their links to arms smuggling and the operation of international crime networks, In that connection, he praised the valuable report of the Group of Experts chosen to assist the Secretary-General in strengtheninq the response of the United Nations to the world's worsening drug problem (A/45/652/Add.1) and especially supported the recommendations made by the Group with regard to the rationalisation of all United Nations machinery in the field of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in order to avoid duplication and waste, without prejudice to the terms of reference of the International Narcotics Control Board. The ways and means of achieving the goal of the elimination of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking should not be allowed to detract from the ultimate aim, and the restructuring of United Nations drug control mechanisms should be regarded as only a starting point towards the achievement of greater effectiveness in international action to eliminate the problem.

16. Mr. MORAN (Canada) noted that 11 November 1990 would mark another milestone in the international struggle against druy abuse and trafficking in drugs with the coming into force of the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, of which Canada was both a signatory and a ratifying state. In order to be fully effective, however, the Convention needed to operate in conjunction with a comprehensive, well-co-ordinated United Nations-led international attack against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, The Member States looked to the United Nations to provide leadership, co-ordination, support and guidance in their efforts to combat drugs. In that connection, he menticned the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, which had resulted in the adoption of a political declaration and a global programme of action and the initiation of a process to enhance the efficiency of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control, as called for in General Assembly resolution 441141. That process had culminated in recommendations by the Secretary-General (A/45/652) and by the Group of Experts assisting him (A/45/652/Add.1), which Canada warmly

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(Mr. Moran, Canada)

welcomed. In particular, it strongly supported the proposal to unify the existing drug control units based in Vienna under a single head reporting directly to the Secretary-General. The new structure should be the central liaison, co-ordination and co-operation mechanism for all drug control activities within the United Nations system and even beyond. Since a more efficient United Nations drug control system could only be of benefit to the entire international community, it was for the community to ensure that the restructuring of the system was in fact achieved.

17, Ms. DRAGHICI-SUTIC (Romania) said that Romania had embarked on the process of ratification of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and that it valued the promising results achieved at the World Ministerial Summit to Reduce the Demand for Drugs and to Combat the Cocaine Threat held in London in April 1990, It fully agreed with the points made in the report of the group of experts established to help the Secretary-General strengthen the response of the United Nations to the drug problem (A/45/652/Add.1) and with the conclusions of the eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/CONF.144/28), at which it had been found that the abuse of drugs was a global problem of great complexity requiring social policies on preventive measures and treatment.

18. The geographical position of Romania made it necessary for its Government to remain alert to the use of its territory as a transit zone for the smuggling of narcotic drugs. Her delegation was convinced that the struggle against drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs was the responsibility of the entire international community. The Government of Romania was prepared to bear its share of that responsibility along with the other participants in the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, in accordance with the Political Declaration they had adopted.

19. Success in the struggle against drugs depended on close co-operation among Governments and between them and the United Nations system. The problem had to be attacked at all levels - local, national, regional and international - by taking concerted action of a practical nature in respect of supply control, demand, prevention and reduction, the elimination of illicit traffic and treatment and rehabilitation. At the local and national level, States were responsible for taking practical measures to ensure respect for each other's laws. Studies on appropriate ways of tackling the problem, such as the one recently issued by the Division of Narcotic Drugs, were always welcome,

20. Mr. MOHAMMAD ALI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said, with regard to the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom at the 32nd meeting of the Committee, that he had found it surprising that in a statement delivered under agenda item 108 on international action to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking, Iraq, a drug-free country, had been named in a context which, in fact, had nothing to do with the matter under discussion.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.