



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 100: INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRAFFIC IN DRUGS: REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/326-S/18049, A/41/354, A/41/408, A/41/473, A/41/494, A/41/527, A/41/528, A/41/558, A/41/559, A/41/637 and Corr.1, A/41/665 and Add.1, A/41/713 and A/41/772; A/C.3/41/2, A/C.3/41/5, A/C.3/41/7)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/41/3, chapt. V, sect. E)

1. Mr. SCHLEGEL (German Democratic Republic) said that illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse had become a problem with grave social consequences that was affecting more and more countries. Drug abuse, encouraged and organized by irresponsible profiteers and illegal markets, endangered the health and security of millions of people. Despite wide-ranging international efforts, it had so far not been possible to reverse that negative trend. There was therefore an imperative need for vigorous action at the national and international level which must include co-ordinated steps to combat trafficking and strengthen the relevant legal instruments, and long-term programmes for economic and social development.

2. The United Nations as a multilateral negotiating forum should play a major role in the international campaign against drug trafficking. The forthcoming International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking could, if well prepared, do much to enhance public awareness of drug problems. The German Democratic Republic regarded international legal instruments as important tools in combating drug abuse. The two existing Conventions had proved their worth and his delegation hoped that all States would fully use the potential inherent in their provisions. There was an increasing need for effective political, legal and organizational measures to be taken against international drug syndicates. The issues to be covered by the new Convention against illicit traffic would require thorough consideration. Overlapping with the two Conventions in force should be avoided. Of course, the provisions must strictly guarantee the sovereignty of States, including their discretion to decide what measures they would take at the national level and in what international activities they would participate. The principle of consensus should generally be observed in the elaboration and adoption of the new Convention.

3. The international campaign against drug trafficking was not a separate issue, but rather formed an integral part of the broad-based endeavours to offer new development prospects to peoples. In the German Democratic Republic, drug abuse was not a factor of social relevance because the social causes of illegal drug markets and drug abuse had been removed. Effective control measures had been enforced in the German Democratic Republic in full conformity with the norms of international law.

4. Mr. BROWNE (Fiji), speaking also on behalf of the other members of the South Pacific Forum (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), said that while the extent and magnitude of drug abuse varied from one

(Mr. Browne, Fiji)

country to another, the problem required concerted international action if it was to be successfully tackled. The principal ways of eradicating it was through proper parental control of young people and their education in the dangers of indulging in drugs. In many countries, the extended family, and indeed the village community, with their conditions and customs, could play a major role in preventing the spread of drugs. Countries of the same region which shared common problems must co-operate closely to ensure an effective response to the challenge posed by drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

5. The influence of the world-wide drug industry was so pervasive that no one could be immune. The notion that a country could be a transit State without suffering the adverse effects of the drug traffic was simplistic. Producer, consumer and transit States must all assume their share of responsibility and not seek to create divisions where unity of purpose was essential.

6. Much of the South Pacific was increasingly becoming a transit zone and the countries of the region needed greater support and co-operation in order to improve their anti-drug systems. Such co-operation and assistance must surely be needed also by other countries.

7. The forthcoming International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, should provide another opportunity for the establishment of genuine international co-operation. The needs of smaller delegations should be kept in mind when the Preparatory Committee discussed the organization of the Conference. The countries of the South Pacific Forum hoped that time would be scheduled for informal meetings so that experts might have the opportunity of sharing experience and ideas with their counterparts from other delegations.

8. More specifically, they hoped that the Conference would deal with: (a) the use of sophisticated methods such as electronic surveillance; (b) the provision of adequate legislation to allow seizure of assets acquired through illicit trafficking; (c) access to banking and other financial records of suspected illicit traffickers; (d) greater efforts to identify the dimensions of the drug problem by the establishment of a central data base.

9. Mr. AHMAD (Brunei Darussalam) said that the problem of drug abuse was a menace which could not be eradicated by one nation alone. His country's concern had been heightened because most of the people involved were young and concerted efforts had to be made to prevent the growing scourge of drug abuse from undermining the economic and social fabric and security of the nation. Accordingly, in December 1984, Brunei Darussalam had established the National Drug Abuse Committee for the co-ordination of all efforts to combat drug abuse. The legislation adopted included severe penalties for drug offenders, which it hoped would deter traffickers, thus preventing Brunei Darussalam from becoming a drug transit centre.

10. The tragic cost of the drug menace in human life, individual suffering and internal instability was beyond the tolerance of any society. It knew no national boundary and respected no ideology. His country, like others, believed that

(Mr. Ahmad, Brunei Darussalam)

concerted action at the national, regional and international levels was necessary to combat the threat posed by drug abuse. Brunei Darussalam, within the Association of South-East Asian Nations, was participating in regional efforts to that end.

11. Brunei Darussalam looked forward to the forthcoming International Conference and emphasized that the most significant aspect of the preparations was the comprehensive multidisciplinary outline of future activities concerning the problems of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. His delegation joined Malaysia in hoping that a joint declaration as an expression of the fervent political will of all participating nations would emerge from the Conference.

12. Ms. DU Yong (China) said that in recent years the situation concerning the abuse of drugs and illicit trafficking had been deteriorating. Drug-related violence, crimes and terrorist acts were the order of the day and the rampant spread of drugs had already affected many countries. To combat drug abuse was a grave challenge to the international community. Her delegation was pleased that it had demonstrated the necessary political will by deciding to convene the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking at the ministerial level in 1986. The Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances currently being prepared was a step forward. In that connection, her delegation endorsed the 14 elements for inclusion in the Convention, approved by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session for 1986.

13. Historically, illicit drugs had brought untold suffering to the Chinese people and it was for that reason that they detested drugs. The severe measures adopted by China against drug abuse and illicit trafficking formed a consistent and unswerving policy. The experience of the past decades showed that it had been effective and had rid China of the menace of drug abuse in the early 1950s. China also intended to ensure that international drug traffickers did not ship drugs to other countries via China. It had therefore taken measures to strengthen its customs facilities, intensify anti-drug work and train customs officers and anti-drug personnel.

14. Undoubtedly, the prevention of drug abuse and illicit trafficking was an arduous and long-term task that needed protracted efforts at the international, regional and national levels. The Chinese Government was willing to strengthen its co-operation with the relevant United Nations agencies and other Governments in order to exchange experience and to learn from each other with a view to eliminating that social evil.

15. Mr. ABRAHAM (Hungary) said that, despite increased public awareness and government control measures, drug dependency had reached proportions that could have grave long-term consequences for many societies. Effective and decisive countermeasures were required at both the national and international levels. Although drug abuse was not a major problem in Hungary, his Government had been actively contributing to the development and functioning of the international drug control system through close co-operation with both international and national drug control bodies.

(Mr. Abraham, Hungary)

16. Hungary was prepared to contribute to the development of the new draft Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and to the preparation of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. It shared the view that the new Convention should not duplicate the provisions of existing treaties. It was necessary to update the 1961 and 1971 Conventions, whose provisions did not always serve to prevent illicit drug traffic or facilitate the monitoring of international shipments of psychotropic substances. Supplementary provisions, which his Government favoured, should not be confined to illicit trafficking.

17. The main weakness of the existing international control system lay in unsatisfactory implementation of the Conventions, as evidenced by the mere existence of illicit cultivation and clandestine manufacture. Assistance should be given to those developing countries which had political and economic difficulties in enforcing the provisions of the Conventions. Meanwhile, demand in developed countries constituted a major incentive for continued production, and it was crucial for those countries which permitted drug abuse to revise their control policies. It was unrealistic to expect to solve the problem merely through law enforcement measures in the supplier countries.

18. Mr. AGUILAR (Guatemala) said that, despite commendable efforts to eradicate the crime of drug trafficking resulting in increased public and government awareness of the dangers of drug abuse, the battle was not yet won. The correlation between drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime made it absolutely essential to implement the recommendations of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders.

19. His country, aware as it was of the gravity of the problem, supported the holding of an International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, and the preparation of a new Convention including provisions on effective international co-operation so as to bring those guilty of illicit trafficking to justice. His Government took an active part in national, regional and international conferences and meetings on the subject. A recent regional meeting of Ministers of Justice and Attorneys-General held in Mexico with the participation of Guatemala had considered the adverse effects of drug abuse and drug trafficking on development and had expressed the political will of their Governments to take vigorous, concerted action in all matters relating to drug control.

20. Education was of particular importance in creating awareness of the dangers of drug abuse. Guatemala commended the work of UNESCO in fostering the inclusion of relevant educational materials in curricula.

21. It was disturbing to note that efforts to curb demand for narcotics had been inadequate. The International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking should therefore be prepared with the utmost care to ensure the effectiveness of the measures it would recommend. Guatemala, like the other Latin American countries, believed that the Conference would be of great benefit to the anti-drug campaign, and therefore regretted that Latin America was not adequately represented

(Mr. Aguilar, Guatemala)

at the Conference according to the indications given by the Preparatory Body. It therefore endorsed the candidacy of Bolivia for the presidency of the Conference and hoped that it would be supported by the other regional groups.

22. Guatemala continued to support all resolutions and decisions on drug abuse and illicit trafficking adopted by the General Assembly and other international conferences and meetings. Closer co-operation was also needed between producer and consumer countries. The latter had an additional responsibility in the anti-drug campaign because of their economic strength.

23. Guatemala welcomed the preparation of the draft comprehensive multidisciplinary outline of future activities relevant to the problems of drug abuse and illicit trafficking, and stressed the need for a range of activities to accommodate different countries' situations.

24. Credit was also due to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control for its useful work in advising developing countries in drug control matters, including the planting of alternative crops. It should continue to receive the support of all countries. Discussion of the issue of drug trafficking by the United Nations and its specialized agencies was, indeed, proof of the shared political will of governments to eradicate the drug trade and its attendant evils.

25. Ms. SEAH (Singapore) said that the drug menace, to which no country was immune, was now aggravated by new forms of drug abuse and by the increasing sophistication of trafficking networks. It was important for the international community to maintain a spirit of determination, commitment and co-operation in combating drug abuse and trafficking. While the United Nations could and had taken the lead in that respect, the primary responsibility rested with Member States.

26. The Singapore Government had given high priority to combating the drug problem, through a strategy aimed at deterring traffickers from using Singapore as a transshipment point and at reducing drug consumption among young people. Simultaneous action was being taken to rehabilitate former addicts, enforce strict legislation, including the death penalty, and educate young people about the dangers of drug abuse.

27. The members of ASEAN, which had co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 40/122 convening the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, saw drug abuse and illicit trafficking as a threat to security and an obstacle to economic and social development. Singapore hoped that the Conference would be an expression of the political will of nations to combat the drug menace, and would give all countries an equal opportunity to determine the future direction of the international drug campaign. The Conference should be not an end in itself, but a stepping-stone for the preparation of more effective long-term strategies. Her delegation considered that the question of the Conference should be dealt with in a separate resolution.

(Mr. Seah, Singapore)

28. Singapore viewed the preparation of a new Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances as another important initiative, and hoped that it would be ratified by a large number of States.
29. Miss EMARA (Egypt) said that drug addiction and drug abuse were sapping the strength of young people in schools and universities throughout the world, and that the time had come to take effective measures to remedy that critical problem. Her country would do all in its power to contribute to the international campaign being waged both in and outside the United Nations. It had, ever since the adoption in 1984 of General Assembly resolution 39/141, supported the preparation of a draft convention against the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs. Such a convention should not repeat the provisions of existing conventions, nor annul obligations imposed by them. It should be formulated in such a way as to attract the widest possible acceptance by States and conform, as far as possible, to the principles of the various States' constitutions, laws and criminal codes.
30. While welcoming a discussion which had taken place on that subject during the ninth special session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Egypt reserved the right to express its views once its competent authorities had concluded their study of the draft. Her country had also been one of the first to give its approval to the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. It hoped that the current financial crisis would not affect the already well-advanced preparations for the Conference, in view of the importance that it should succeed in establishing an effective and integrated strategy to combat drug abuse on the national, regional and international levels.
31. Mr. GUMUCIO GRANIER (Bolivia) said that his country and others in his region had called for firm international action to combat the drug problem even before it had taken on the dimensions of a crisis. Calls for international action and for an international conference to deal with the problem had long been resisted by certain member States which, even though they were seriously affected by drug use, were more concerned about the costs of an international conference than its possible benefits. His delegation was therefore pleased that the drug problem was now regarded as an international one and that the United Nations was regarded as the most appropriate forum for dealing with it.
32. The problem originated in the habits of the industrialized societies, where people could afford drugs, even though the production of drugs for such countries tended to create a demand in the poor producing countries as well. All countries, whether consumers or producers, were victims of the problem and international action must be taken without pointing the finger at anyone. The primary responsibility for such action lay, however, with the consumer countries because drugs would continue to be consumed as long as there was a demand, and those countries also must bear the main burden of providing the financial and technical resources to combat the problem. The moral bankruptcy of the industrialized and highly developed countries, where drug profits were enormous, had resulted in a problem that must be attacked at all levels, from illegal production and trafficking to consumption.

(Mr. Gumucio Granier, Bolivia)

33. His own country was aware of its responsibilities as a producer, but in Bolivia coca was cultivated out of desperation by poor peasants faced with a depressed market for agricultural goods. The replacement of coca by other crops therefore required a programme of economic and social development that would enable the peasants to survive.

34. The Bolivian Government had embarked upon an extremely effective programme, in co-operation with the United States and other countries, to combat drug trafficking and production in Bolivia, but the other countries of the region must co-operate with Bolivia to prevent the drug manufacturers from simply moving elsewhere. Bolivia had been an active participant in a number of regional agreements and meetings designed to forge stronger links in the common struggle and welcomed progress on the international level, especially the efforts of the United States, which recently had passed an important anti-drug law designed to combat the main problem, which was demand.

35. His delegation welcomed the reports of the Secretary-General (A/41/558 and 559) and particularly the possibility of convening a Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA).

36. Turning to the report in document A/41/713, he was gratified by the stress laid on greater public awareness and on the strengthening of United Nations programmes and activities. New seminars such as the one referred to in paragraph 55 would be useful. In connection with paragraphs 45 and 80, greater efforts were needed to reduce the cultivation of coca in his country and to strengthen activities in the areas of prevention, education, treatment and rehabilitation.

37. His delegation welcomed the forthcoming International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and hoped that its success would not be jeopardized by political manipulation designed to advance the international or domestic policies of States.

38. Mr. CASTRO (Colombia) said that illicit drug trafficking had serious repercussions on the social, economic and political life of most Member States. It was threatening the very survival of society. It was upsetting the precarious economic balance in the poorer countries, forcing some of them to pay for situations created by others.

39. It was meaningless to differentiate between the effects on drug producers or consumers, for, clearly, they were similar. The problem also had a universal dimension. Until very recently, it had concerned only a few countries, and had been concentrated in a few regions, but now it affected nearly two thirds of the Member States of the United Nations.

40. That nations affected by the drug problem were committed to fighting it was evident from the statements that had been made in the Third Committee. The results of their work had been positive, but not completely satisfactory. The fact was that illicit drug trafficking and drug addiction were on the rise, so much so that

(Mr. Castro, Colombia)

Governments were being urged to re-examine their current anti-drug strategies. Colombia agreed with many of the observations that had been made in the Committee to that effect.

41. In Colombia's view, an analysis of the problem would benefit from an overview which took into account all the social, economic, cultural and political factors behind illicit trafficking and addiction. Whatever solutions were adopted should address all of those causes and factors simultaneously. Nothing short of bold solutions were in order. An understanding of what constituted drug trafficking and drug addiction were also essential to overcoming the problem, as were better national and international legal instruments.

42. Trafficking, an international offence, should be dealt with on an international scale. That meant taking parallel action on all fronts, namely, production, trafficking and consumption. For example, if, in one country, more than \$60 million were spent on consumption, it would obviously have considerable influence over the other countries involved in the cycle. Neither should merely punitive measures be stressed. The very real economic, social, political and cultural aspects of the problem should also be taken into account. Action at the international level must be co-ordinated, complementary and integrated. The complexity of the problem should be a call to unity, and not a pretext for separate action. That, of course, did not mean that individual States should shirk their responsibilities by delegating them to international forums.

43. The United Nations offered two unusual opportunities to adopt political definitions and update strategies: the draft Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, scheduled to meet at the ministerial level in June 1987. Colombia's statements to the Committee would guide its actions with regard to both the Convention and the International Conference in Vienna.

44. His country had suffered virtually every harmful consequence of illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse. In one of its periodic reports, the International Narcotics Control Board had emphasized Colombia's outstanding achievements in the eradication of illicit cultivation and trafficking. Especially noteworthy was its practice of financing prevention and rehabilitation programmes with the proceeds of confiscated assets and economic sanctions imposed on offenders.

45. Mr. KASEMSRI (Thailand, said that Thailand had always taken strong and effective measures to cope with drug abuse and illicit trafficking at the national level.

46. Law enforcement and cultivation control affected only the supply aspect of the drug problem, however. In an effort to curb the demand for illicit drugs, the Thai Government was emphasizing preventive education and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

47. Indeed, the same two-pronged approach was also logical in the regional and international context. Mutual co-operation, rather than recrimination, would be the most effective means of eradicating the scourge of narcotics. His Government

(Mr. Kasemari, Thailand)

maintained bilateral arrangements with some dozen countries in the fields of law enforcement, cultivation control and information exchange. In the regional context the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had been praised by the Secretary-General for its commitment to the war against drugs. Thailand was also the host country for the ASEAN Law Enforcement Training Centre.

48. At the international level, Thailand had been a party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1954 and the 1972 Protocol and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. It had long been a member of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and had co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 40/122. Thailand pledged its full support to the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking that would meet in Vienna, for it was destined to be one of the most important international gatherings in the annals of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.