



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
13 March 2008

Original: English

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Fifty-first session

Vienna, 10-14 March 2008

Draft report

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Addendum

Thematic debate on the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly: general overview and progress achieved by Governments in meeting the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008 set out in the Political Declaration adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session

1. At its 1288th to 1291st meetings, on 11 and 12 March, the Commission considered agenda item 3, "Thematic debate on the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly: general overview and progress achieved by Governments in meeting the goals and targets for the years 2003 and 2008 set out in the Political Declaration adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session".

2. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the following documents:

(a) The fifth report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem (E/CN.7/2008/2 and Add.1-6);

(b) Report of the Executive Director on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (E/CN.7/2008/8).



3. The Chairman of the Commission opened the thematic debate. As agreed by the Commission, the thematic debate was divided into three subthemes, under which various topics were considered, as follows:

(a) Shared responsibility as a basis for an integrated, balanced and sustainable approach to the fight against drugs through national and international policies:

- (i) Drug control strategies;
- (ii) Integration of health, social and enforcement initiatives in national drug policies;
- (iii) Effective data collection;
- (b) Drug demand reduction:
 - (i) Drug abuse prevention;
 - (ii) Trends in illicit drug consumption;
 - (iii) Treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers;
 - (iv) Reducing the health-related and social consequences of drug abuse;
 - (v) Consideration of supplementary information from relevant intergovernmental, international and regional organizations on aspects of demand reduction covered in the action plans adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session;
 - (vi) Progress and areas requiring further action;
- (c) Countering illicit drug supply:
 - (i) Trends in the illicit production, manufacture, trafficking in and supply of narcotic drugs and amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors;
 - (ii) Control of precursors;
 - (iii) Judicial cooperation;
 - (iv) Countering money-laundering;
 - (v) Use of the Internet for drug trafficking;
 - (vi) Drug supply reduction through alternative development and preventive alternative development;
 - (vii) Consideration of the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development, adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session.

Deliberations

Subtheme (a). Shared responsibility as a basis for an integrated, balanced and sustainable approach to the fight against drugs through national and international policies

4. The Director of the Division for Treaty Affairs of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) introduced subtheme (a), “Shared responsibility as a basis for an integrated, balanced and sustainable approach to the fight against drugs through national and international policies”. Statements were made by the representatives of Colombia, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Morocco, Peru, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

5. A statement was also made by the observer for New Zealand.

6. A statement was also made by the observer for the Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs.

7. Several speakers stressed the importance of using the year following the fifty-first session of the Commission to consider areas that would require further attention beyond 2009. Member States were encouraged to consider possible new approaches to addressing the world drug problem in a comprehensive and collaborative manner.

8. Some speakers expressed concern that some aspects of drug control had received greater attention than others since the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together. Several speakers emphasized the importance of a balanced approach to supply and demand reduction. Successful supply reduction efforts in drug-producing regions had been undermined by the continued demand for drugs in all parts of the world. All Member States were encouraged to take ownership of efforts to counter the world drug problem.

9. Attention was paid to the enhancement of existing international data collection mechanisms, including the possible restructuring of the biennial reports questionnaire and annual reports questionnaire processes. Some delegates offered specific suggestions for that restructuring. Speakers noted that international drug strategies could be efficient only if reliable data were available to enable accurate assessment of progress in combating the world drug problem. All Member States were encouraged to provide the Commission, to the extent of their capacities, with the necessary information.

10. A number of speakers drew attention to the successes achieved since the twentieth special session in developing national monitoring strategies. Those speakers emphasized the need to sustain those successes and to enhance national information systems. The international community should assist those Member States with insufficient capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate data in developing the necessary tools.

11. Speakers also discussed the importance of incorporating into the review process reliable data available from complementary sources, including subregional and regional organizations.

12. Many speakers welcomed the increased level of cooperation between States since the twentieth special session and recommended that that cooperation should be extended and strengthened beyond 2009. In particular, speakers discussed the importance of sharing the lessons learned from national experiences through the exchange of best practices and evidence-based solutions.

13. Several Member States stressed the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach at the national level. Such an approach entailed the incorporation of the law enforcement, legislative, health and social sectors, as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations, into national strategies. UNODC was requested to assist in the promotion of coordination among stakeholders at the international level.

Subtheme (b). Drug demand reduction

14. The Director of the Division for Operations of UNODC introduced subtheme (b), "Drug demand reduction". The Chief of the Global Challenges Section of UNODC gave a presentation on the salient aspects of demand reduction. Statements were made by the representatives of Germany, Morocco, Argentina, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the United States.

15. A statement was also made by the observer for New Zealand.

16. Statements were also made by the observers for the World Health Organization, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific, the League of Arab States, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, the International Harm Reduction Association and the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (on behalf of the Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs).

17. A presentation given by the Secretariat addressed the level of implementation of demand reduction activities, the scientific evidence of the effectiveness of the various approaches used and the cost-effectiveness of investments in prevention, treatment and reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse. The presentation highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to demand reduction that would take into consideration the imbalance of resources for demand reduction and the stigmatization of drug-dependent persons. The presentation also addressed the need to focus on the reduction of human suffering as a main aim of the international drug control conventions.

18. Several speakers emphasized the importance of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, held in 1998, and the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction adopted at that special session. They also considered it essential to use the lessons learned in the period following the twentieth special session to further encourage and facilitate the identification, sharing and adoption of best practices by and among Member States. Some speakers further stressed the need to build on the work already done in order to sustain and expand demand reduction activities. It was noted that prior to 1998 demand reduction had been regarded as a controversial issue, whereas since then demand reduction had held an

important place on the international drug control agenda. Several speakers felt that the positive responses by Member States to the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction had been an important legacy of the twentieth special session.

19. Several speakers were in agreement that, judged on the basis of the information available, progress in demand reduction responses since 1998 had been modest. It was further noted that, although the number and scope of interventions had increased, the level of implementation in key areas was as yet not sufficient to achieve significant and measurable results in drug demand reduction.

20. However, many speakers recognized that long-term, sustained demand reduction strategies could alleviate the drug problem, although the lack of financial, technological and human resources was a major obstacle to increasing the scale of demand reduction programmes and interventions, such that it remained difficult to give a high priority to demand reduction in national agendas. Several delegations and speakers underlined the fact that a balanced approach to drug control required strengthening demand reduction measures without neglecting supply reduction and law enforcement.

21. Some speakers underlined the importance of investing in research in the area of demand reduction and the need to disseminate findings in order to inform the development of programmes and interventions.

22. Given the complexity of the drug abuse phenomenon, it was considered important to embrace a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach. Also important for the success of demand reduction interventions was the involvement of civil society, which should be ensured by encouraging the active participation of and collaboration with non-governmental organizations. In that connection, many delegates and speakers noted with satisfaction the preparatory activities for the global forum entitled "Beyond 2008", which was being organized by the Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs and was to be held in July 2008.

23. Reflecting on the lessons learned at the national and international levels in the decade to 2008, several speakers indicated the need for a continuum of practices describing a comprehensive approach to drug demand reduction that aimed first at the prevention of drug abuse, second at facilitating access to treatment and third at taking effective measures to reduce the health and social consequences of drug abuse. Various demand reduction activities were mentioned by speakers as part of their national strategies: the development of life skills for children and young people, the involvement of parents and family, the provision of accessible and quality treatment services, the availability of screening and brief interventions, the role of faith-based approaches in specific cultural contexts, the provision of alternatives to the imprisonment of drug offenders, substitution therapy for opioid dependence and the provision of services to prevent HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases.

24. Several delegates and speakers emphasized that measures to reduce the harm caused by drugs were essential to comprehensive drug demand reduction policies. They emphasized that such measures, as well as the provision of universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention and care services, were effective ways of limiting the further spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. However, it was noted that many countries had not made efforts to take those measures and that some of those measures were not

universally endorsed by Member States. Some delegates expressed appreciation for the discussion paper entitled “Reducing the adverse health and social consequences of drug abuse: a comprehensive approach”, which had recently been published by UNODC.

25. Several delegates called for the prioritization of and a more explicit commitment to human rights in the context of drug control efforts. They stated that drug abusers should not be stigmatized and were entitled to human rights in compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹ They asserted that a rights-based approach constituted the most effective way of preventing HIV/AIDS. States were called upon to actively respect and promote those human rights. The need to monitor and assess the status of human rights was mentioned as a way of preventing possible criminal acts related to drug offences.

26. Some delegates expressed concern regarding the separation of producer and consumer countries in responses to the drug problem. Such separation was considered contradictory to the balanced approach, which considered demand and production in the same context and linked production together with demand in all countries.

27. Several delegates highlighted the need to develop enhanced monitoring systems and tools in the light of the lessons learned from the biennial reports questionnaire process. They emphasized the importance of mechanisms that allowed for monitoring and evaluation of the quality, impact and coverage of demand reduction interventions, and that provided a forum for the standardization and harmonization of data collection methods, concepts and tools. Some speakers reiterated the importance of working in close cooperation with national, regional and international bodies in order to reduce the overall burden of reporting on Member States and to make the most effective use of resources.

Subtheme (c). Countering illicit drug supply

28. The Chief of the Anti-Organized Crime and Law Enforcement Unit of UNODC introduced subtheme (c), “Countering illicit drug supply”. An adviser of the Anti-Money Laundering Unit of UNODC introduced topic (iv) under the subtheme. The Chief of the Anti-Organized Crime and Law Enforcement Unit introduced the debate on topics (i), (ii) and (v) under the subtheme. The Chief of the Organized Crime and Criminal Justice Section of UNODC introduced the debate on topic (iii) under the subtheme. The Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs of UNODC made a further introduction on topic (i) under the subtheme, which was followed by a debate on that topic. The Chief of the Sustainable Livelihoods Unit of UNODC introduced the debate on topics (vi) and (vii) under the subtheme.

29. Statements were made by the representatives of Tajikistan, Nigeria, Argentina, Mexico, Australia, the United States, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Thailand, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Colombia, China and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Statements were also made by the observers for Belarus, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Honduras, Indonesia, Togo, Ecuador, Algeria and Lebanon. A statement was also made by the observer for

¹ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

Palestine. Statements were also made by the observers for the European Commission and the European Police Office.

30. Speakers under the subtheme highlighted the efforts of their countries to comply with international standards to counter money-laundering through the adoption of comprehensive legislation criminalizing money-laundering and by establishing comprehensive prevention measures for financial institutions and other entities vulnerable to money-laundering. Some speakers stressed the need for enhanced domestic cooperation between law enforcement agencies and other entities involved in countering money-laundering. They also called for better-targeted regional and international cooperation for effective information and data exchanges for the purpose of prosecuting money-laundering cases and confiscating proceeds of crime.

31. Several speakers acknowledged the increase in trafficking in precursors by transnational organized crime networks and called for the strengthening of law enforcement efforts. A number of speakers emphasized the importance of preventing the diversion of precursors from legitimate trade at an early stage through effective regulation by the relevant authorities and by establishing partnerships with the private sector, such as the pharmaceutical industry. Speakers described new diversion methods and routes used by traffickers, such as air and maritime routes. Effective drug law enforcement required maintaining awareness of those evolving patterns, combined with regular training activities on new trends and countermeasures. A number of speakers reported on the successful implementation of national counter-narcotic action plans, which were guided by the goals established by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session and included information and awareness-raising campaigns. In addition, speakers emphasized the importance of incorporating integrated demand-reduction initiatives with prevention responses into their national counter-narcotic strategies.

32. Speakers emphasized the importance of international and regional cooperation, in particular among law enforcement agencies. In that regard, it was important to strengthen border controls and cooperation among various countries in that area. Speakers welcomed and confirmed their support for regional and international joint initiatives such as Project Prism.

33. Speakers considered that the exchange of information and the collection of data and intelligence were necessary tools for assessing the true magnitude of the world drug situation and for facilitating a better understanding of the latest trends in trafficking in precursors. It was recommended that data collection systems be improved and that they use qualitative and quantitative data from as many sources as possible.

34. With respect to judicial cooperation, speakers mentioned various means adopted by their Governments to implement the measures to promote judicial cooperation, as described in the Measures to Promote Judicial Cooperation (Assembly resolution S-20/4 C), such as the adoption of laws on extradition and mutual legal assistance, the signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements at the regional and international levels, and the designation of competent national authorities and cooperation with law enforcement authorities of other countries in specific drug-related cases. Several speakers reported on measures adopted by their

Governments to address aspects of combating organized crime such as witness protection and provisions to counter money-laundering.

35. One speaker emphasized that the recommendations and measures to promote judicial cooperation contained in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session remained valid and should further guide the efforts of Governments in that area.

36. Most speakers highlighted the importance of specific measures for achieving effective judicial cooperation and law enforcement. Those measures included the extradition of drug offenders, controlled deliveries, cooperation to combat trafficking by sea, the sharing of intelligence and cooperation among law enforcement authorities, which helped to build trust, in particular between neighbouring countries.

37. Speakers suggested maintaining effective points of contact, providing guidance on the drafting of successful requests, regularly assessing procedures and addressing obstacles to cooperation. One speaker suggested that Member States define clear conditions for the implementation of controlled deliveries that also took into account the need for confidentiality and safety.

38. A number of speakers offered to share the experiences of their countries with other Member States, and other speakers requested assistance from UNODC and from other Member States in reforming national legal systems and developing law enforcement capacities. Several speakers expressed their appreciation for the technical assistance provided by UNODC in the drafting of laws and the preparation of training seminars.

39. Several speakers noted the need for further action to contain the problem of amphetamine-type stimulants. Shifts detected in the market suggested a diversification of illicit manufacture and trade. Reductions in trafficking observed in some regions were being offset by increases in others. While the number of manufacture sites was declining in some parts of the world, the size of those sites remaining was increasing, reflecting an increasing stronghold of organized crime and large international networks involved in ATS manufacture. The globalization of manufacture, trafficking and consumption of drugs had gradually diminished the differences between manufacturing countries and consumer countries.

40. A number of speakers noted that, despite several successful national and regional initiatives and law enforcement efforts to combat the illicit manufacture, production and abuse of ATS, there was a need to focus more greatly on law enforcement cooperation for the early identification of emerging trends in manufacture and trafficking. The importance of intelligence-led law enforcement was emphasized. It was necessary to improve capacity for the investigation and dismantling of clandestine laboratories for countering new manufacturing methods and for restricting the availability of new chemicals and precursors, including their diversion.

41. Some speakers stressed that efforts should focus on building capacity to monitor, detect and understand the ATS problem, on developing mechanisms and methodologies for monitoring ATS in order to improve estimates and on producing quality data for use in policy decisions and strategic planning. The need for

improved, standardized methodologies to estimate the prevalence of ATS consumption was highlighted.

42. There was consensus that alternative development had been a useful tool in addressing illicit drug crop cultivation from the development perspective, but that its reach and the resources allocated to alternative development programmes had been insufficient over the past 10 years.

43. Speakers noted the importance of preventive alternative development and described successful examples of proactive approaches for the design and implementation of alternative development projects, including the qualitative assessment of their social and economic impact.

44. It was noted that one Member State had obtained positive results in implementing comprehensive alternative development programmes that focused on the environmental protection of forest areas, formal education and vocational training and the introduction of productive livelihood systems. In the case cited, eradication programmes had been an essential component preceding the provision of assistance.

45. Speakers highlighted the pressing need to deliver immediate assistance to those farming families that had lost their livelihoods. The links connecting illicit crop cultivation, extreme poverty, marginalization and insecurity were underlined by some speakers.

46. Most speakers agreed that international cooperation, and the support of the international community for countries affected by illicit drug crop cultivation that were implementing alternative development programmes, needed to be strengthened and designed to fulfil long-term objectives in a well-planned and well-timed manner. Many speakers emphasized the importance of continuing support for the alternative development programmes in South-East Asia, which had proven successful in reducing illicit opium poppy cultivation.

47. A number of speakers stressed the importance of horizontal cooperation through the sharing, within and between regions, of best practices and lessons learned. Many speakers emphasized the need to increase international cooperation to finance, design and implement alternative development programmes. In that respect, some speakers emphasized that cross-border cooperation was essential to the success of alternative development. However, it was important that bilateral and multilateral support be flexible and adaptable and not be based on political agendas.

48. Some speakers noted the importance of secure and stable markets in developed countries for alternative development products and highlighted the need for international cooperation to provide technical assistance in order to improve the quality and added value of those products.

49. The attention of the Commission was drawn to the importance of adhering to human rights principles when planning and implementing alternative development and eradication interventions. Some speakers expressed concern at the interpretation by the International Narcotics Control Board of traditional and cultural use of coca leaf.

50. Speakers stressed the importance of continued and long-term development support to Afghanistan in order to promote the establishment of sustainable

development and to avoid a return to opium cultivation in those provinces recently made free from opium poppy. The importance of a balanced emphasis on law enforcement and development efforts in Afghanistan was also stressed.

51. Several speakers highlighted the successful working relationships that their countries had developed with UNODC, as well as the importance of continuing to support alternative development initiatives through UNODC and bilateral channels.

52. One speaker highlighted the need to improve the monitoring of illicit crops in order to better inform the international community on the scope of illicit coca cultivation. It was important that credible law enforcement efforts should accompany the implementation of alternative development projects.

53. Speakers discussed the assertion that alternative development alone would not bring about a lasting solution in cases where poverty was not the driver of opium poppy cultivation. It was stressed that the challenge for the upcoming decade would be not to develop new commitments but to implement those commitments contained in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, in accordance with the relevant United Nations conventions.

54. Concern was expressed at the impact of drug trafficking and criminality on West Africa, Central America and Central Asia. That situation, coupled with the decline in the world prices of commodities, had driven farmers of licit crops to cultivate illicit crops. The proposal of UNODC that any future action plan continue to include cannabis was welcome.

55. The Chairman of the Commission summarized the salient points of the thematic debate as follows:

[...]
