

4 October 2012

English, French and Spanish only\*

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**Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of  
National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies,  
Latin America and the Caribbean**  
Antigua, Guatemala, 1-5 October 2012

**Draft report**

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**Addendum**

**Consideration of topics by working groups**

**(b) Joint agency task forces in response to drug trafficking**

**The working group on the above topic met during the fifth and sixth meetings, held on 3 October 2012. In its consideration of the topic in question, the working group formulated the following observations:**

1. Some States had insufficient resources to robustly meet the challenges of illicit drug trafficking and so were vulnerable to the adverse influence of powerful trafficking groups.
2. National inter-agency task forces had been convened in response to specific threats where multi-agency, overlapping legislative responsibilities needed to be coordinated to combat precursor diversion. Outcomes had led to the prevention of diversion attempts and the identification of clandestine manufacturing sites through geo-referencing and the tracking of diverted chemical routings.
3. Encouraging operational partnerships between national law enforcement agencies enhanced their capacity to be effective, such as the case of enforcing border controls in remote or difficult regions where a single agency acting alone may not have sufficient resources to undertake the task.
4. A number of countries had formalized inter-service cooperation agreements with military services (army, navy, air force) and civilian police forces, in support of

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\* English, French and Spanish are the working languages of the subsidiary body.



their national strategy against illicit drug production and trafficking. Significant successes against illicit drug trafficking have been achieved through such partnerships.

5. International inter-agency task forces between law enforcement agencies were convened in response to shared cross-border, regional and international trafficking threats and included partnerships with foreign drug law enforcement authorities and international agencies.

6. The two United Nations initiatives Container Control Programme and Aircop supported both domestic and international inter-agency cooperation in an operational response to sea and air border control.

7. The proactive use of intelligence obtained from all sources available to law enforcement agencies formed the right basis for effective action against drug trafficking, while information obtained through cooperation in joint task forces had led to the arrest of international fugitives wanted for trafficking offences.

8. Data provided by national drug observatories was an important tool for making accurate decisions and formulating policies on drug supply and demand, because of the inter-institutional nature of the information gathered.

**The working group drew up the following conclusions:**

1. Joint agency task forces were important because they developed the necessary synergies between different law enforcement agencies and bridged the gap between civilian and military enforcement countermeasures against illicit drug production and trafficking.

2. It was inevitable that multi-agency cooperation would lead to encounters with criminal organizations involved in illicit activities other than drug trafficking, resulting in more effective policing and leading to greater community protection. The successes experienced by the agencies partnered in the Container Control Programme and Aircop initiatives were a result of the effectiveness of this approach.

3. The timely exchange of information and evidence was essential for the arrest of fugitives wanted in connection with serious drug trafficking offences, and international cooperation was the basis for such success.

4. Agreement to cooperate with external partners such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), ICE, the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and other foreign posted law enforcement liaison officers against traffickers, offered national law enforcement services invaluable access to international operational support and intelligence on trafficking groups and their modus operandi.

5. The international task forces Operation Cohesion and Project Prism coordinated by the International Narcotics Control Board had proven very effective in reducing the diversion precursor chemicals to illicit drug manufacture.

6. It was important to strengthen the capacities of national drug observatories so as to be able to strengthen information sharing and coordinated efforts, as there existed differences in the structures of these bodies in countries across the region.

**The working group adopted the following recommendations:**

1. In view of the increasingly sophisticated methods employed by trafficking networks, Governments should support their law enforcement authorities to formalize agreements that enable cross-border task force cooperation in response to specific needs and operational requirements.
  2. Governments should review the current practice and procedure related to undertaking the investigation of illicit drug trafficking and related organized crime offences in foreign jurisdictions, together with a similar review of procedure related to the formal gathering of evidence from these jurisdictions, to determine if existing practice meets the operational needs of their criminal justice system.
  3. Governments should aim to strengthen national drug observatories by means of institutional capacity-building and inter-institutional coordination, at the domestic, regional and international levels, in order to close gaps in data so that more accurate decisions can be made.
  4. Governments should complement the information provided in the Annual Reports Questionnaire with relevant data compiled by the national drug observatories so that a more accurate assessment can be made regarding the follow-up on the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.
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