



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Forty-eighth Session
OFFICIAL RECORDS

1659th meeting

Tuesday, 24 March 1970,
at 11 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. J. B. P. MARAMIS (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 5

Narcotic drugs (continued):

- (a) Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/4785 and Summary, E/4785/Add.1)
- (b) Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (E/4788 (Summary) and E/INCB/5)
- (c) Technical assistance in narcotics control (E/4789)

1. Mr. HJELDE (Norway) observed that the most alarming aspect of the growing problem of drug addiction was the increase among the young. Even young teen-agers were among the steadily increasing number of victims of an evil which they themselves were unable to combat. Not only did the increase involve an enormous number of personal tragedies; it also created immeasurable problems for society. As stated in the interim report of the Secretary-General on technical assistance in the narcotics field (E/4789), drug abuse was detrimental to the working capacity of the individual and could eliminate a segment of the population from the process of production, thus creating a heavy burden on society.

2. Whereas in the past attention had been focused mainly on the traditional narcotic drugs already subject to international treaties, there was now equal concern over the even more rapidly growing abuse of dangerous psychotropic substances such as LSD, amphetamines, barbiturates and tranquillizers, which were not under international control. His Government therefore welcomed the draft Protocol on international control contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/4785) of such substances as a means of dealing with the dangerous situation that had arisen. In preparing that draft the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had fulfilled its task in a highly commendable manner. It was the Council's responsibility to ensure that the Protocol became a legally binding instrument as soon as possible.

3. His delegation had decided to support the Commission's draft resolution B proposing the convening of a conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of the draft Protocol, a procedure which was entirely in conformity with Article 62(4) of the United Nations Charter. The alternative procedure whereby the draft resolution would be transmitted to the General Assembly for action did not commend itself, for the subject-matter was extremely complex and the Committee which would have to deal with it had been overburdened with work for several years.

4. Immediate steps at the national level, as proposed in draft resolution C, were also necessary, for the process whereby international instruments were adopted and

entered into force was a time-consuming one and if remedial action was not taken soon the task of finding a solution would become infinitely more difficult. He proposed the addition of a sixth preambular paragraph to that draft resolution which would read:

"Recalling its resolution 1401 (XLVI) of 5 June 1969 in which Governments, pending the entry into force of an international instrument, were recommended to apply urgent control measures to certain stimulant drugs".

5. Norway, like the other Nordic countries, attached the greatest importance to the search for a solution to the problem of drug addiction. His delegation had listened with keen interest to the suggestion made by the United States representative (1658th meeting) for a world plan of action. In seeking a solution it was important to bear in mind that drug addiction was closely linked with the widespread feeling of frustration, particularly among young people, the increasing impairment of the human environment and persistent international unrest.

6. Mrs. GAVRILOVA (Bulgaria) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the tribute paid by other delegations to the valuable work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board. While not a member of the Commission, her delegation had closely followed its work. Bulgaria was a party to all the existing international instruments controlling or prohibiting the illicit growth, production and distribution of narcotic and psychotropic substances, and it strictly observed their provisions. It shared the alarm expressed in the reports of the two bodies and in subsequent oral statements over the growing abuse of drugs, particularly among young people.

7. The administrative measures proposed in the reports of the Commission (E/4785) and the Board (E/INCB/5) with a view to tightening the system of narcotics control were necessary and useful and could be expected to produce results, provided they were strictly observed by the States concerned.

8. However, the proposed Protocol and resolutions contained in the report of the Commission entailed largely administrative measures, while drug addiction was basically a social evil; it was a product of a sick society. The immediate causes varied from country to country, ranging from poverty, hunger and illiteracy to the absence of sound ideals, which was now a characteristic feature of life in certain developed countries. It was true that some young people were impelled by a feeling of curiosity and a desire to do what was fashionable. However, drug addiction was principally an expression of revulsion against the prevailing social system with its inequalities, oppression and class antagonisms. When young people's ideals were frustrated

they developed a nihilistic attitude towards life, particularly in countries waging odious, aggressive and hopeless wars.

9. Her delegation therefore felt that administrative measures alone would not cure the evil of drug addiction. The underlying causes, rather than the symptoms, needed to be treated. Yet the question had not been placed on the agenda of the Commission for Social Development, nor had it been the subject of substantial debate in the General Assembly. Those States affected by the scourge of drug addiction should be recommended to improve the social environment by creating conditions for social and racial equality and by encouraging the development of inspiring ideals.

10. The proposed conference for the adoption of the draft Protocol would set a dangerous precedent. The draft did not reflect the spirit of the Board's report, which laid stress on the need for measures that would be truly universal. As the report stated, even one weak link in the system would mar the efficacy of genuine international control. Yet the authors of the draft Protocol appeared to have no interest in the establishment of such a system. The restrictive clauses which discriminated against certain States were evidence that the authors had not abandoned their invidious desire to use the United Nations as a weapon to dominate other countries. An international instrument which discriminated against certain States was without precedent; moreover, it could not be effective. Her country would vehemently oppose such a discriminatory decision by the United Nations and would make every effort to uphold the principle of universality by seeking amendments to the draft Protocol and the relevant draft resolution.

11. Mr. PAOLINI (France) expressed his delegation's gratification at the international community's recognition of the urgency and importance of establishing international control over psychotropic substances. Whatever might be the sociological causes of drug addiction, it would not have become such a serious world problem had the production, sale and export of such substances been brought under international regulation. That was why the Council had requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to convene a special session for the purpose of preparing a draft protocol on psychotropic substances not yet under international control. The Council could be satisfied with the Commission's success. The draft Protocol proposed in chapter III of the Commission's report would supplement the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs¹ by bringing hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates and tranquillizers under international control. The draft Protocol was based on three principles: that each country should be able to limit the kind and quantity of psychotropic substances used within its borders to what it needed for scientific and medical purposes; that each country should ensure the national regulation of such substances in accordance with the international agreement; and that the degree of control to be applied to barbiturates and tranquillizers should not unduly burden the licit trade in such substances. The draft Protocol, which had been adopted unanimously by the Commission, should be put into effect as soon as possible.

12. His delegation agreed with the Commission on the need for the holding in 1971 of a conference of plenipoten-

tiaries for the adoption of the Protocol; since the Protocol would have the same importance and scope as the 1961 Single Convention, the same juridical procedures should be followed for its adoption. Indeed, the complexity of the subject and the fact that some articles had been left pending made it essential to hold a special conference for its adoption.

13. His delegation's position on the articles of the Protocol on which a difference of opinion had arisen in the Commission was consistent with the views it had expressed in other bodies. It had favoured article 23, on territorial application, which it considered fully justified, and article 21, on procedure for signature, ratification and accession, because it thought that the political question raised in the debate was alien to the purposes and technical nature of the Protocol. It also felt that the Conference should be held in Geneva, because it was the seat of the competent international narcotics services.

14. With regard to the periodicity of the sessions of the International Narcotics Control Board, he supported the position taken by the Board on pages 5 and 6 of its report. Under its mandate the Board should be able to meet as often as necessary in order to take action to fulfil its control functions.

15. He recognized the great importance of the psychosocial origins of drug abuse, particularly among the young, and hoped that the current studies of the situation described in paragraphs 84 to 89 of the Board's report would result in more effective preventive action. However, prevention alone was not enough; accordingly, the importance of the Protocol could not be over-emphasized.

16. He was pleased to note from the Board's report that it had adopted recommendations designed to reduce the availability of psychotropic substances by controls over production and to abate the demand for narcotic drugs by programmes for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation (para. 3); that the Turkish Government had been progressively reducing the area assigned to poppy cultivation with a view to concentrating its production of opium and improving the efficiency of control (para. 36); and that considerable progress had been made in the campaign to replace the cultivation of cannabis by other crops in Lebanon (para. 52). He hoped that Afghanistan would receive the technical assistance it needed to improve the economic and social structure of the area whose inhabitants were now economically dependent on opium and that technical assistance could be made available to Thailand and Burma for the purpose of drug control. He was gratified at the recommendations made at the meeting of representatives of all the United Nations organs and the specialized agencies concerned held at Geneva in June 1969 for the purpose of seeking ways and means of assisting countries in their efforts, *inter alia*, to find replacement crops in order to put an end to the illicit and uncontrolled production of narcotic raw materials. He looked forward to receiving a report on that plan in the Council.

17. His delegation would vote in favour of draft resolutions A, B and C, contained in chapter IV of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and for the Norwegian oral amendment to draft resolution C.

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.XI.1.

18. Mr. KUSEVIC (Director, Division of Narcotic Drugs), replying to a question asked by the United States representative at the previous meeting, said that the original proposal had been that the conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of the Protocol should last eight weeks, with provision for its extension, if necessary, but that in the final proposal the period had been extended by two weeks because the conference for the adoption of the Single Convention had lasted ten weeks; the task of that conference had, in fact, been a simpler one from the substantive point of view inasmuch as it had merely had to unify existing conventions. On the other hand, if the conference decided to include in each of the four schedules annexed to the Protocol only those drugs on which opinion was unanimous, leaving it to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to add others, if necessary, its duration could be reduced by two weeks. To limit the conference to five weeks seemed to him unduly optimistic, but to plan for six weeks, would be realistic if the conference was not to discuss the drug schedules.

19. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said that the statement of the administrative and financial implications of convening a conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of the Protocol on Psychotropic Substances was contained in document E/4785/Add.1; the cost estimate had been based on the assumptions set forth in paragraph 2 of that document.

20. At the Council's 1658th meeting, the United States representative had requested the Secretary-General to provide further information on the convening of such a conference on the assumptions that: (a) the length of the conference would be limited to a five-week period early in 1971 and (b) the conference would be held at Headquarters in New York, the other assumptions remaining essentially the same.

21. Accordingly, the revised estimated cost of convening a conference in New York for a five-week period early in 1971 was \$225,500; the comparable cost of holding the conference at Geneva for the same period of time was \$95,800. Both those amounts represented estimated additional costs to the budget of the Organization. The difference in cost between New York and Geneva was largely due to travel and subsistence for the staff of the Division of Narcotic Drugs to attend the meeting in New York and the anticipated conference schedule for New York, which would require the recruitment of additional conference servicing staff. He noted that the anticipated conference schedule for Geneva during the same period would require the recruitment of less additional conference personnel.

22. The estimates were the following:

	New York \$	Geneva \$
Consultant	8,000	8,000
Conference servicing staff (translators, revisers, interpreters, typists, overtime, etc.)	172,200	62,000
Post-session documentation	4,000	4,000
Printing final report	10,000	10,000
Travel and subsistence for member of Office of Legal Affairs to Geneva . . .	—	1,300
Travel and subsistence of members of Board	3,000	2,500
Miscellaneous costs (reproduction, hospitality, etc.)	8,000	8,000
Travel and subsistence for nine Professional and three secretariat staff from Geneva to New York	20,300	—
Total additional cost of convening a five-week conference	225,500	95,800

23. Mr. PHILON (Greece) said that, although his country had no serious problem with narcotic drugs in general or with the psychotropic substances in particular, it was worried that the abuse of such substances might spread from the rich to the poor countries, especially in view of the increasing number of such substances and the ease of transporting them. His country therefore supported the draft Protocol contained in the Commission's report and hoped that all countries, including those not affected by the problem, would sign the Protocol and put it into effect as soon as possible.

24. His delegation had been concerned to read in paragraph 6 of document E/4789 of cases of drug abuse among children. It should not be forgotten that drug use might have unforeseeable psychological effects. He welcomed the great awareness of the problem shown particularly in New York City and by newspapers, which were giving due attention to the problem.

25. He suggested that the duration of the conference might be reduced if all proposals and amendments to the draft Protocol could be submitted in advance to the Secretariat, which would translate and distribute them and produce for the conference one consolidated document containing all such proposals and amendments, on which delegations would already have received instructions.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.