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New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman:

Ms. COOMBS  
(Vice-Chairman)

(New Zealand)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Coombs (New Zealand),  
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

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

1. Mr. AL-JABIR (Qatar) said that the scourge of drug abuse and illicit trafficking was becoming worse, with disastrous consequences for individuals, especially the young, and for States, whether they were producers, consumers or transit zones. Drugs hampered economic development and contributed to the spread of AIDS. General Assembly resolution 43/122 had emphasized that the connections between drug trafficking and international criminal organizations and the violence and corruption associated with them were highly detrimental to the democratic institutions, national security and economic, social and cultural structures of States. The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances had recognized that illicit traffic was an international criminal activity which undermined the political foundations of States. That had prompted the General Assembly to consider the establishment of an international criminal code for such crimes.
2. Recent developments in communications, transport, production, marketing and financing had meant that illicit traffic in drugs had become a source of profits second only to the illicit traffic in arms, and both were connected to international terrorism. Drug traffickers in Colombia had carried out armed attacks against government drug enforcement agencies and officials. He commended the efforts of the Colombian Government to combat those gangs and urged the world community to provide financial and technical assistance to eliminate that evil.
3. Qatar supported all international efforts to suppress illicit trafficking and had acceded to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, even though the strict observance of Islamic precepts in Qatar meant that drugs were not a social problem in that country. His delegation was confident that the Convention would enhance international co-operation and strengthen existing international instruments, and attached great importance to the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control. International efforts to combat illicit traffic should be focused along three main lines: first, severe penalties for drug traffickers, including confiscation of the proceeds from illicit trafficking and greater control of the movements of traffickers in accordance with the Convention and other relevant international instruments; secondly, with regard to consumption, intensive public awareness campaigns and prevention programmes aimed at reducing the demand for drugs, the provision of jobs and education to youth, and treatment and rehabilitation for drug addicts; thirdly, with regard to production, assistance to drug-growing countries seeking to replace their production with legal crops. That could only be done by increasing financial assistance, ensuring greater access to

(Mr. Al-Jabir, Qatar)

international markets for such legal crops and providing job opportunities and education for the youth. He commended the activities of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control as a major source of multilateral funding and technical co-operation. The drug problem was not analogous to natural disasters, which were beyond human control; it was created by people and he hoped that the concerted action of people would be able to eradicate it.

4. Mr. CHEN Shiquin (China) stressed the need for greater international co-operation in combating drug-related criminal activity. The producing, consuming and transit countries had a shared responsibility to participate in international and regional co-operation aimed at controlling drug abuse. In that connection, it was essential to observe the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and to respect national sovereignty. Developing countries encountered greater difficulties in drug abuse control because of their social and economic problems. They therefore required greater economic and technical assistance within the framework of international co-operation. Efforts to eliminate illicit drug production and trafficking must be complemented by a reduction in demand. The drug-consuming States should strive to reduce the demand for illicit drugs by adopting comprehensive measures through legislation, administration and rehabilitation.

5. The United Nations must play a greater role in implementing the relevant conventions and action plans, co-ordinating international drug control efforts and providing more technical and material assistance to Member States. His delegation agreed with the views put forward in the report of the Secretary-General on enhancement of the efficiency of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control (A/45/652) and supported the amalgamation of the three existing Secretariat units into a single executive structure. In that regard, greater attention should be given to operational activities without prejudice to other functions. The new structure should co-operate closely with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and be provided with adequate human and financial resources.

6. The entry into force of the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances should provide another useful weapon in the war against drugs. China called upon all States that had not yet done so to accede to the Convention as speedily as possible and underscored the need to take concrete measures to ensure the implementation of all relevant international instruments in the field.

7. Recently, international drug syndicates, taking advantage of the geographical proximity of China's south-western border to the Golden Triangle, had carried out drug trafficking activities inside his country. The Chinese Government was giving great attention to the problem and the authorities concerned had intensified interdiction and rehabilitation efforts. China was amending its national legislation concerning drug-related crimes in accordance with the 1988 Convention with the aim of prescribing severe penalties for such crimes.

(Mr. Chen Shiquiu, China)

8. His Government had actively participated in international co-operation in the field of narcotics control, and strongly supported the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board. In recent years, China had co-operated with United Nations drug control agencies, especially the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control. Through joint efforts with the Fund and other countries in the region, it hoped to strengthen drug abuse control in the area of the Golden Triangle and enhance China's capability in drug interdiction and rehabilitation.

9. Mr. DE LA SABLIERE (France) said that the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly and the numerous international meetings held in 1990 on drug abuse control had laid the basis for greater international co-operation in the coming decade. The great increase in drug production was linked to the low prices for raw materials, the diminishing share of developing countries in international trade and lower purchasing power in those countries as a result of the economic crisis affecting them. The various United Nations conventions relating to drug abuse provided clear guidelines for the measures to be taken by all States, producer, transit and consumer countries alike.

10. In May 1990, France had adopted a national action plan to combat drug abuse aimed at reducing the demand for drugs, strengthening means for suppressing illicit drug trafficking and use, rehabilitating and reintegrating drug addicts, and preventing money laundering.

11. The international effort to combat drug abuse must be viewed as the shared responsibility of all States. In that connection, the question of economic and financial assistance for crop substitution must be given careful consideration. Transit countries which were unable to control drug trafficking must be provided with support. The training of police, legal, pharmaceutical and education personnel must be strengthened in order to conduct a broad-based prevention policy. International co-operation must include all countries and focus on their specific problems.

12. The United Nations Office at Vienna required greater support from Member States. The role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should be expanded and its effectiveness should be enhanced. In pursuance of its mandate, the Commission should become the focal point for international co-operation in drug abuse control.

13. In the interest of better co-ordination of United Nations drug control measures, the current structural reform should lead to the establishment of an operational body to ensure close collaboration between the various specialized agencies and institutions. The plan for drug abuse control should cover the entire United Nations system and the necessary funds must be allocated to ensure its success.

14. Mrs. KABA-CAMARA (Côte d'Ivoire) said that only the United Nations was able to co-ordinate international efforts aimed at drug abuse control. While the report of the Group of Experts on enhancement of the efficiency of the United Nations

(Mrs. Kaba-Camara, Côte d'Ivoire)

structure for drug abuse control (A/45/652/Add.1) was a valuable contribution, it was questionable that a new structure could prove successful unless the question of financing activities to control drug abuse was resolved. The confiscated property of drug traffickers and funds that had been frozen in Western financial institutions because they were linked to drug trafficking could be used to support the international effort to combat drug abuse.

15. That effort had been impeded by a lack of financial resources and the economic crisis affecting many developing countries, particularly those in Africa. The social and economic cost of drug addiction in African countries was growing at an alarming rate. The widespread poverty of rural population groups resulting from the drastic slump in prices for raw materials was one of the basic reasons for the increased production of illicit drug crops.

16. His country had taken measures to suppress drug trafficking by expanding its police force and customs service and lengthening the prison terms for drug-related crimes. With the help of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, Côte d'Ivoire had set up a drug analysis laboratory and established an interministerial committee to study the drug abuse problem and propose guidelines for a national policy to combat drug trafficking.

17. Nevertheless, the difficulties encountered demonstrated that the drug problem was linked to the overall question of economic and social development. Interdiction was not enough in order to halt illicit drug production and trafficking. Just remuneration for raw materials and a policy to ensure economic recovery were necessary in order to eradicate the causes of the problem. More than ever, it was necessary to step up international co-operation to achieve that objective.

18. Mr. HITAM (Malaysia) said that the success of the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly had demonstrated the commitment of the world community to increase international co-operation to combat drug abuse. The strategies contained in the Global Programme of Action should be implemented as broadly as possible at the national, regional and international level. His delegation agreed with the views expressed in the report of the Secretary-General on the global programme of action against illicit narcotic drugs (A/45/536) concerning the practical difficulties of monitoring drug control programmes and hoped that delegations would propose new monitoring methods in order to ensure overall effectiveness.

19. Malaysia supported the views of the Secretary-General on enhancing the efficiency of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control, as stated in paragraph 6 of his report in document A/45/652. The proposed unified structure would enable the United Nations to play a central role in the field and should be headed by a senior official at the level of Under-Secretary-General so that he could carry out his tasks more effectively. Malaysia hoped that the Secretary-General would appoint the head of the United Nations drug control programme as soon as possible so that the process of restructuring could begin by 1 January 1991.

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

20. His delegation believed that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should play a central role in United Nations activities against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and that the duration of the Commission's regular and special sessions should be increased to enable it to devote more time to a subject of such universal importance. An improvement in the Commission's functioning would greatly contribute to the efficiency of the United Nations drug abuse control structure. The Economic and Social Council should review the situation as a matter of urgency. Consideration might also be given to the possibility of annual instead of biennial meetings.

21. Since Member States had agreed in the Global Programme of Action that higher priority should be given to United Nations activities in drug abuse control, it was crucial that the United Nations International Drug Control Programme should be given the resources it needed to carry out its activity effectively. His delegation sympathized with the appeal by the President of the International Narcotics Control Board for the restoration of budgetary resources previously allocated to the Board to carry out its treaty mandate. His delegation would also favour the allocation of more regular budgetary and extrabudgetary resources across the whole programme so that existing and new mandates could be carried out more efficiently and effectively.

22. He welcomed the appointment of the Group of Experts to advise and assist the Secretary-General on the enhancement of the efficiency of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control and noted its conclusions and recommendations in document A/45/652/Add.1. He was perturbed, however, that some of the recommendations called in effect for the creation of more groups of experts to undertake detailed studies of various issues. While groups of experts might be needed from time to time, it was important for Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations on their own to provide and exchange information and expertise that they themselves had acquired, so that a bank of important data could be established and co-ordinated by the United Nations without imposing further strain on the Organization through the proliferation of groups of experts and their reports. Available resources should be used to the full to produce optimum results.

23. Malaysia noted with satisfaction that the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances would enter into force on 11 November. Malaysia had been one of the first countries to sign the Convention and hoped to ratify it early in 1991.

24. His delegation supported the various draft resolutions, proposals and recommendations before the Committee. While a great deal had been done during the past year, much more could be done through effective international co-operation and greater commitment by States, with complete trust in the United Nations to play a central role. It was important to remember that, ultimately, it was the way in which individual States implemented their own policy strategies and co-ordinated their action with other countries that would decide the success of their drug control programmes.

25. Mr. NANDOE (Suriname) said that his delegation fully supported the measures already taken by the international community to strengthen international co-operation, since the drug problem transcended national borders and could not be resolved by any country acting alone. In that connection he stressed the importance of the part played by the United Nations, which as early as 1951 had adopted the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, followed by the Protocol of 1972 and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971. Suriname was a party to those conventions and had signed the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It was also a party to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, which expressed concern about the link between mercenaries and drug traffickers, and he urged all other States to become parties in order to speed up its entry into force. His country also welcomed and supported the Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action adopted by the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly and called for speedy implementation of the Programme which attached equal importance to the three most significant aspects of the drug problem: demand, supply and trafficking.

26. His delegation welcomed the well-balanced and well thought out report of the Group of Experts, contained in document A/45/652/Add.1, and supported the recommendation for the creation of a single executive unit, directed by a senior official on a full-time basis, to integrate all the activities of the three existing units within the Secretariat. The unit, which should be headed by a high-level and experienced official, should be established as soon as possible.

27. Since Suriname had become a transit port in the international drug trade, the drug problem had become acute. Outdated legislation was now being adapted to combat the problem and a committee had been set up to study the legislation and recommend amendments, as well as to draft new legal provisions.

28. Bilateral agreements on the suppression of illicit drug trafficking and production had been signed with neighbouring countries and with some of them practical steps had been taken for co-operation in law enforcement. Suriname had a special narcotic drug unit within the police force which in recent years, with the assistance of other organizations and the general public, had seized considerable amounts of drugs destined for delivery abroad. In 1986 a national council on drug control had been created to deal with control and prevention of the illicit use of drugs and to supervise the treatment of drug addicts.

29. His Government, noting that the drug transit problem in Suriname had emerged following the downward economic trend, considered that there might be a link between drug transit and economic development problems. Economic assistance and support would therefore greatly help his country in its efforts. Suriname whole-heartedly supported all initiatives to solve the global drug problem and commended the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies on the progress that had already been made.

30. Ms. VARGAS (Nicaragua) said that, despite intensive national and international efforts, the drug problem was not abating. No country, developing or developed, was immune from its effects. The Secretary-General in his opening speech to the

(Ms. Vargas, Nicaragua)

seventeenth special session of the General Assembly had described the problem as a time bomb and had stressed the need for urgent action by the international community as a matter of priority.

31. The drug problem had existed before the creation of the League of Nations. She recalled the different stages of legislation over the years, from the International Opium Convention signed in Geneva in 1925, to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, of 1988, which Nicaragua had been among the first 20 countries to ratify. That Convention embodied the fundamental notion of shared responsibility and international co-operation, and the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries.

32. The seventeenth special session of the General Assembly had been convened to decide how the international community and the United Nations could deal effectively with the growing drug menace and had adopted a Political Declaration and a Global Programme of Action and had proclaimed the period from 1991 to 2000 as the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse.

33. At the beginning of the 1990s, the international community now had a set of multilateral instruments admirably suited to promoting co-operation between States, and the various United Nations organs such as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Division of Narcotic Drugs, the Secretariat of the Board, and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, were working to recommend effective measures and to help Governments in their national efforts.

34. Her delegation appreciated the intensive efforts of the United Nations in combating drug abuse and the arduous work of the Secretariat but regretted that the recommendations of the Group of Experts contained in document A/45/652/Add.1 had not been issued sooner, so that Governments could have more time to study them in detail. Nevertheless, her delegation could support the recommendation that the three existing secretariat units should be amalgamated into a single executive structure, whose chief executive would be a very senior official under the authority of the Secretary-General, as set forth in paragraphs 32 and 33 of document A/45/652/Add.1; and that, as indicated in the annex to document A/45/652, the new structure would be called the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

35. Nicaragua was convinced that laws alone would not solve the problems of drug abuse. They must be accompanied by social measures to raise standards of living, especially in the developing countries, which were particularly vulnerable to the drug problem because of the impact of the world economic crisis. In Nicaragua, where drug abuse control was a constant preoccupation, a national drug commission had been set up in 1989, one of whose main tasks was to bring national legislation into conformity with the rules of the Vienna Convention of 1988. Young people were being taught about the dangers of drug abuse as part of their formal education.



(Ms. Vargas, Nicaragua)

36. Nicaragua was also involved in joint drug control action with other Central American countries. As an expression of its political will to co-operate in efforts to control drug trafficking, his country had signed the Regional Co-operation Agreement to Eradicate Illegal Drug Trafficking, which had highlighted the importance of regional and international co-operation and the need to adopt legislation relating to elimination of drug trafficking. In addition, Central American drug control authorities had met at Managua in August 1990 for the purpose of establishing mechanisms to monitor compliance with the Regional Co-operation Agreement. That meeting had adopted a declaration calling for the creation of a Central American commission for the eradication of illegal drug trafficking which would, inter alia, undertake a study of the legislation regulating drug traffic in the region. Such a study would lead to the standardisation of that legislation, in conformity with the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and would help define priority areas for future drug control activities.

37. Nicaragua would continue to endorse any action at the international, national and regional level which would help transform Central America into an area free of illicit drug trafficking.

38. Mr. KUNKOBU (Burkina Faso) said that drug abuse and drug trafficking represented a growing threat and required vigorous and resolute action on the part of the international community. While it had been spared until recently, Burkina Faso was now faced with a growing drug problem and was taking action against it. It was a party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and maintained regular contact with the International Narcotics Control Board at Vienna, providing it with the statistical information required.

39. In order to prevent the use of prescription drugs for illicit purposes, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare was the sole organ authorized to import and distribute drugs. Nevertheless, in recent years, law enforcement agencies had seized relatively large quantities of illicit drugs; specifically, Burkina Faso was increasingly serving as a transit point for cocaine shipments. Other drugs, such as cannabis and various stimulants and sedatives, were imported into the country and consumed by a growing number of the young and the unemployed. Many people were multiple drug abusers.

40. To cope with the situation, the Government had undertaken a number of initiatives to prevent drug abuse, including educational programmes on drug use, national seminars bringing together representatives from customs, law enforcement agencies, environmental protection agencies, and airport and tourism divisions, radio broadcasts and publicity spots in local languages on tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse and articles on drug abuse in national newspapers.

41. The combat against drugs also had to be carried out at the international level. Co-operation and solidarity between developed and developing countries was the only way to provide effective implementation of the Political Declaration and

(Mr. Kunkobu, Burkina Faso)

the Global Programme of Action, adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session in February 1990.

42. It was equally important to develop co-operation among the countries of the African subregion. Faced with massive economic and social problems, those countries had to work together to prevent any further difficulties which would certainly arise from any increase in illicit drug production on their territories. In that connection, his delegation fully supported the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

43. Mr. LENNOX-HOYD (United Kingdom) said that there was an increasing awareness that the United Nations was uniquely capable of harnessing international opinion and co-ordinating international action to practical effect. It had clearly done so in combating one of the most alarming social threats, the use of narcotic drugs. The United Nations specialized drug control agencies were doing valuable work. In addition, guidelines for practical action had been hammered out at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly and the World Ministerial Summit to reduce demand for drugs and to combat the cocaine threat. The United Nations Decade of Action against Drug Abuse offered an opportunity for the international community to adopt effective measures to counter the threat from drugs and provided a timetable for doing so.

44. His delegation welcomed the imminent entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Legislative procedures were under way to enable his Government to ratify the Convention early in 1991 and to extend the provisions of the Convention to the dependent Territories.

45. Among the important additional steps that each country had to take were: ratification of United Nations and regional conventions; conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements on tracing and confiscating the proceeds of drug trafficking; and prevention of the diversion of precursor chemicals into the illegal manufacturing of drugs.

46. The United Kingdom was implementing a number of important drug control policies and measures. One of its main objectives was to reduce the demand for drugs and, in addition to domestic measures to that end, it was setting up a Demand Reduction Task Force to offer guidance to policy makers in other countries. There was also a need for more effective action in the field of precursor chemicals. While it had long and successfully used a suspicion-based monitoring system, his country realized that such an approach might not be the most appropriate for monitoring the international chemical trade. It therefore fully endorsed the comprehensive study of the issues in that field being carried out by the Chemical Action Task Force, of which it was a member.

47. In its efforts to prevent money laundering, his Government had thus far concluded 18 bilateral arrangements to trace, freeze and confiscate the proceeds of

(Mr. Lennox-Boyd, United Kingdom)

drug trafficking and would shortly sign the Council of Europe convention on that matter. It welcomed the report of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, which provided a valuable framework for international action in that sphere. The Intergovernmental Expert Group to Study the Economic and Social Consequences of Illicit Traffic in Drugs had also made a number of sound recommendations with regard to the Task Force and to banking practices and his delegation hoped those recommendations would be endorsed by the General Assembly.

48. The United Kingdom was providing a great deal of financial assistance and training to other countries engaged in the fight against drugs. Moreover, it had increased its contributions to the United Nations activities in that area and hoped other Member States would follow its lead. It believed that drug abuse control should be accorded a higher priority in the United Nations regular budget. It fully supported the recommendation of the Group of Experts regarding the consolidation of the three existing drug control units into one structure. That structure should be directed by a full-time, senior-level official and should have the freedom of action to take the measures necessary for effective drug control. His Government also endorsed the other recommendations of the Group of Experts. Those recommendations must form the basis for immediate reform of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control.

49. Mr. DEKANY (Hungary) said that, having gone beyond the stage of raising awareness of the drug problem, the international community must implement the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session and at its seventeenth special session. Furthermore, international co-operation could not be effective without universal accession to the relevant conventions and protocols and the provision of increased resources for drug control activities. At the same time, the international community had to take into account the difficulties arising from insufficient resources, conflicting interests and inadequate domestic regulations.

50. A growing number of transit countries, including Hungary, were being transformed into consumer countries. Although its drug problem was not comparable to that of many other European countries, Hungary was witnessing an alarming increase in the abuse of prescription drugs among young people. While available on the black market, hard drugs were beyond the means of most Hungarians. To combat the drug problem, his country had elaborated a special drug programme which attempted to involve the public in prevention activities and also provided for the setting up of local and national drug abuse treatment centres. In addition, his Government had decided to establish an intersectoral task force to deal with drug problems.

51. Hungary was a party to the basic conventions relating to drugs. It had taken an active part in the elaboration of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and was considering ratification. It co-operated actively with international drug control agencies by, inter alia, providing data on the production and consumption of drugs in Hungary. It had, on a provisional basis, restricted the export and import of Schedule I precursor chemicals to a single company.

(Mr. Dekany, Hungary)

52. The link between drug trafficking and organized crime was well known. In that connection, his country was encouraged by the regional efforts to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking. It greatly appreciated the visit to the "Balkan route" countries of a delegation composed of representatives from UNFDAC, Interpol, and the Customs Co-operation Council, which had helped to identify several promising projects. His Government also attached great importance to the work of the Council of Europe Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group), whose forthcoming agenda included discussion on the holding of a European East-West meeting on drug abuse in 1991. Having just become a member of the Council of Europe, Hungary was endeavouring to implement the Council's recommendations for action in the field of drug control.

53. The United Nations played a key role in international efforts to combat drug abuse. His delegation therefore attached great importance to such events as the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly and the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. Model treaties would serve as important tools in the fight against drug traffickers and international crime.

54. His Government endorsed the recommendation of the Group of Experts regarding the consolidation of the three existing secretariat units into one, headed by a senior official reporting directly to the Secretary-General. The first priority for that new unit should be to assist the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in monitoring compliance with treaty obligations. While agreeing with the Secretary-General's recommendations with respect to improving the functioning of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, his delegation felt that Commission itself should be entrusted with that task at its forthcoming session. Furthermore, INCB, which played a major role in controlling the legal production, manufacture and trade of drugs, must retain its ability to function in an independent manner.

55. His delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation concerning the creation of a United Nations International Drug Control Programme. Such a structure would ensure efficient co-ordination of all United Nations drug control activities. Finally, increased resources for UNFDAC assistance activities would substantially enhance the authority of the United Nations in spearheading drug control efforts.

56. Mr. MOLINA ARAMBARRI (Argentina) said that the reduction of international tension had unfortunately not been accompanied by a corresponding decline in the international drug trade, which had instead been increasing at an alarming rate. The drug traffickers, motivated by enormous profits, corrupted the institutions of the countries in which they operated, thereby obtaining licence to undermine the political and institutional stability of those countries.

57. The drug problem was an international one and could be dealt with effectively only through the vigorous action of the entire international community. There was no artificial division between producer, consumer and transit countries in the drug

(Mr. Molina Arambarri, Argentina)

trade. All were victims of that criminal activity and the United Nations was the appropriate forum for organizing international efforts to deal with it. It was encouraging to note that the international community had in fact become increasingly aware of its responsibilities in that area.

58. The Latin American countries had made commendable efforts to combat illegal trafficking, but comparable efforts were required on the part of the consumer countries to reduce the demand. The greatest responsibility lay with the developed countries because they were the major consumers and had the resources needed to end the traffic once and for all. Production must be stopped through crop substitution, but that required co-operation from the industrialized countries to prevent economic dislocation. Substitute crops must be economically viable and marketable. Industrialized countries must provide technical, economic and financial assistance to promote the necessary development in the producer countries and to combat trafficking in the transit countries.

59. In order to make the United Nations structure for drug abuse control more efficient, the existing structures should be merged into a single one headed by a high-level official reporting directly to the Secretary-General. That would increase efficiency, avoid duplication and establish sufficient operational authority to achieve positive results.

60. His country had been active in preparing the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It was already a signatory, and would soon accede to and ratify it. The Convention was a good example of the progress made in recent years in efforts to reduce the production and consumption of drugs. He stressed, however, that the causes of drug abuse must also be studied if the problem was to be eliminated completely.

61. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados) said that legal institutions had been threatened, economies destabilized and societies pushed to the brink of disaster as a result of the continuing escalation of drug abuse, and he therefore welcomed the development of national and international strategies to deal with it. His delegation was particularly gratified to note that reduction of demand was now considered as important as curtailment of supply. The Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which would soon enter into force, was especially welcome because it included effective measures to address many drug-related activities, and he therefore hoped that it would become universal. His country, which had recently enacted new and comprehensive legislation to combat drug trafficking, would accede to the Convention.

62. In addition to enacting new legislation to combat drug trafficking his Government had developed a national plan of action that included drug treatment and rehabilitation measures and a comprehensive public education programme to reduce the demand for drugs. However, many small States, such as his own, lacked sufficient resources to wage a war on drugs and required increased bilateral and multilateral assistance. His own country had benefited greatly from bilateral assistance. The United Nations drug control bodies had also done commendable work

(Mr. Blackman, Barbados)

and he therefore urged that efforts be made to remedy the lack of financial and human resources that impaired their ability to discharge their mandates. The new integrated structure recommended by the Group of Experts (A/45/652/Add.1) must also be provided with adequate financial and human resources if it was to be effective as well as efficient.

63. Mr. VILLAGRAN DE LEON (Guatemala) said that the international community had recognized its collective responsibility to combat the production and consumption of drugs and that the United Nations had a central role to play. He therefore welcomed the proposals by the Group of Experts (A/45/652/Add.1) to integrate the activities of the various drug control bodies and units and the Group's recognition of the need for better co-ordination and leadership. Doubts persisted, however, about the new organization, how existing secretariats would be integrated and how it would be financed, and those doubts must be dispelled in the resolution to be adopted. He hoped that United Nations efforts in the area of drug control could still be strengthened despite the financial crisis that had led to unfortunate cuts in programmes of particular importance to developing countries. The wealthier States must make a proportionally greater contribution to United Nations efforts to combat the drug problem and do more to strengthen international co-operation for development.

64. It was unfortunate that the resources available to the international community to fight drugs were so feeble compared with the enormous profits available to the drug trade. Those profits were clearly not being invested in the developing countries that produced the drugs. The developing countries were further disadvantaged in international trade by unprecedently low prices for their exports. The resultant indebtedness meant a reduction of essential social services, the failure of development plans and increasing poverty, thereby giving poor farmers a powerful incentive to produce drug crops. Crop substitution could not succeed unless farmers were assured adequate income and social services. The international community must make more resources available to the producer countries so that a strategy of crop substitution could be made feasible by providing legal market alternatives.

65. The violent crime associated with drugs was threatening the democratic institutions and human rights of a number of countries. The developed countries, whose growing market for drugs was largely responsible for that situation, must study the reasons for increasing drug abuse. The study requested in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 44/142 should also deal with the economic pressures that forced farmers in developing countries to grow drug crops. The connection between the drug trade and the arms trade, and the efforts of armed groups in developing countries to undermine burgeoning democracy, must also be studied.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.