

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTH HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIRST MEETING

held on Friday, 21 February 1975, at 2.50 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. JASJIT SINGH

India

ILLICIT TRAFFIC (agenda item 9) (continued) (E/CN.7/566, E/CN.7/569, E/CN.7/575)

Dr. BELLINGHOU (Jamaica) said that, in view of the United States representative's statement (780th meeting), he would endeavour to show the Commission the other side of "Operation Buccaneer". There had been a steady increase in illicit traffic from Jamaica to the United States of America, initially engaged in by young people who hid drugs in false heels or wigs and, after 1970, with the aid of aeroplanes using small landing strips. The Government of Jamaica had reacted rapidly to the latter development and the unmanned landing strips had been placed under military control and subsequently enclosed. Moreover, legislation had been introduced to provide for the seizure of aeroplanes used in illicit traffic, and heavy fines or prison sentences of from 3 to 5 years had been imposed. There had been co-operation with the United States authorities with regard to training, but a plan to destroy illicit cannabis crops with chemical weed-killers had been abandoned as being too drastic. The results of all the efforts made, however, had been disappointing, as before 1973, about 77 per cent of all seizures had been destined for the United States market and after 1973, the amount destined for foreign markets had been 70 per cent of total seizures. The main reason for failure was that the traffickers were very resourceful; when the landing strips had been closed, for instance, they had built new ones or landed aircraft in fields. Unfortunately, the specialized training that Jamaican narcotics officers had received was not so useful for dealing with such unorthodox operations. The discovery that Jamaica had become a transit point for illicit traffic in cocaine from South America to the United States was one of the satisfactory outcomes of the training programmes, but very few traffickers had been caught, and the efforts made did not appear to have been fully rewarded. Nevertheless, the technical assistance provided by the United States would always be greatly appreciated by his Government. What was important was that specialist narcotics squads should succeed in anticipating what traffickers were likely to do rather than discover their methods of operation when new techniques had already been developed.

He informed the Commission that discussions he had had with the Jamaican police indicated that the figures given for the number of cannabis plants destroyed were probably greatly exaggerated, and expressed the hope that such an error would not be repeated.

Mr. JOCHIMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the provisional data available for 1974 on the development of drug addict criminality in the Federal Republic of Germany indicated a decline of 0.4 per cent. Yet, although the steep increase recorded in 1972 had not continued, the fact that 130 persons had died from drug abuse in 1974 was an indication that particular importance should still be attached to the suppression of drug addict criminality. In 1974, 9,600 persons had been convicted of trafficking in and smuggling drugs - 1,000 more than in 1973.

/...

Various quantities of cannabis, raw morphine, heroin and cocaine had been seized by the Customs and police authorities, and he gave the Commission the comparable figures for 1973 and 1974. Although there had been a steady reduction in the quantities of cannabis seized, from 6,114 kilos in 1972 to 5,839 kilos in 1974, cannabis was still the drug most in demand; however, heroin and cocaine seizures were rising, which indicated that the trend towards the use of so-called hard drugs was gaining ground. Owing, no doubt, to the stringent measures of repression being taken, the Federal Republic was not, it appeared, being used as a transit country.

In order to improve criminal police co-operation within the Federal Republic of Germany, a Permanent Working Group on Narcotics had been established, which included representatives of the police, the Customs, border guard services and others, and ensured a comprehensive exchange of information between all the agencies concerned with the suppression of drug addict criminality. The Group's work was supplemented by regional panels. His Government believed that there should be a permanent exchange of topical information at the international level, and it welcomed the measures being taken by ICPC/Interpol. Only by strengthening existing international co-operation would it be possible to combat the illicit traffic effectively, and the Federal Republic would provide its full support in that endeavour.

Mr. MAE (Observer for Senegal), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that the review of the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances during 1975 (E/CN.7/575) showed how serious the drug situation had become in Senegal; indeed it had led his Government to set up an Inter-ministerial Working Group, which had recently presented its conclusions. One of its conclusions was that large seizures of illicit drugs did not reflect any decline in the illicit traffic in cannabis, which was difficult to control because cannabis crops tended to be grown in very inaccessible areas of the country. Consequently, it was planned to establish a new mounted brigade that would operate in the desert, a sea-borne brigade to guard the coast, and a special brigade for Dakar itself.

He informed the Commission that delinquents who voluntarily submitted to treatment were not punished and were allowed to retain their anonymity, although the latter privilege could be withdrawn for other reasons. Traffickers, on the other hand, and particularly physicians who abused their professional position, were punished more severely.

As a result of the flood of psychotropic substances that had been entering Senegal, his Government was planning to ratify the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Import licences were already obligatory for such drugs, and exports were a State monopoly. As a consequence of those measures, Senegalese addicts had taken to the use of latura motel, but new legislation had just been introduced to prevent their cultivation or use.

His Government recognized that Senegal had become a transit point between Europe and Latin America, and was taking active steps to prevent the illicit traffic from using that route.

Mr. BYRIBS MALLABEDA (Observer for Spain), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that, owing to his country's proximity to areas in which drugs were grown clandestinely and its tourist and migrant-worker traffic, Spain could be said to be at a cross-roads of illicit international traffic. In line with the general trend in earlier years, traffic in cannabis was increasing, and there had been more seizures of hashish resin and oil. A comparative study of the seizures of cannabis and hashish had shown that the figures for hashish by weight had increased by twice as much as those for cannabis, and that there had been cases of seizures in excess of 50 kilos; seizures of cocaine and LSD had also increased. Most of the major seizures were taking place in areas of Spain that were close to Africa, such as Malaga and Algeciras, but some were also made in Madrid and Barcelona. The number of criminal prosecutions had increased too, the traffickers being tried under the Penal Code and various other statutes. Training programmes were continuing for administrators and other professional persons. Most of the traffickers prosecuted were young and often tourists who used drugs themselves and sold them when they ran short of money, but there were increasing numbers of consumers between the ages of 14 and 18 who were still at school. Many of the drugs were smuggled in secret compartments in cars that had been adapted for that purpose in specialized workshops.

The first case involving hashish oil had occurred in September 1973, and amounts of up to 10 kilos had since been seized. Cocaine was being brought in from the Americas, usually by students of various nationalities who came to Spain to continue their studies. There had been an increase in cases involving LSD, sometimes in the form of irregularly shaped coloured pills, representing doses of 200-250 gammas. The traffickers, of course, tended to concentrate on drugs that were acceptable in their markets, offered the highest profit and occupied the least space. His Government was taking action to ensure that their efforts were immediately neutralized.

The number of seizures had increased as a result of the appointment of more and better trained narcotics control officers; another helpful factor had been the excellent co-ordination of the efforts of the Spanish authorities with those of the United States of America and with ICPO/Interpol.

The strict control of psychotropic substances generally and amphetamines and barbiturates in particular had resulted in a number of cases of unlawful consumption, in the form of weight-reducing preparations. The existence of that loop-hole had been brought to the attention of the authorities concerned. In order to ensure proper control, the details of Spain's narcotics control programme had been fed into a computer so that the results could be assessed accurately.

In conclusion, he informed the Commission that Spain was continuing its specialized training courses for narcotics control officers, and had invited various countries to arrange for their own officials to attend. Spain would also be very glad to exchange its experience with that of other countries.

Dr. KCHOUK (Observer for Tunisia), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that there was fortunately no real illicit traffic problem in his country, although cannabis grew wild in some areas and had to be destroyed. There

was only a very small domestic traffic in cannabis leaves, and the total number of seizures had fallen. Incomplete data available at the national level indicated that the situation had not deteriorated during 1974, although illicit international traffic was beginning to pass through Tunisia. In January 1975, for instance, the Tunisian police had seized 660 kilograms of cannabis resin; most of it had been smuggled by Europeans and North Americans, who had intended to sell it on the illicit international market. As a result of that development, the Tunisian authorities had increased their vigilance and were collaborating closely with the specialized services of the international community, and particularly with the authorities of neighbouring countries and ICPO/Interpol. Consequently, his delegation considered the draft resolution on the cannabis problem (E/CN.7/L.380) most valuable and would support it fully.

So far, there had been no illicit traffic in psychotropic substances, and although Tunisia had not yet ratified the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, they were, in effect, under strict Government control.

Dr. RENN (Sweden) said that the fact that nearly all countries were reporting a greater volume of illicit traffic should be regarded as a call to the international community to make the relevant international instruments fully effective. Sweden, for its part, was still coping with a drug abuse problem, the drugs in question being obtained from illegal sources. The number of illegal laboratories that had been found was very small, and the medical and pharmaceutical professions co-operated fully with the authorities. His Government was gratified at the co-operation established with ICPO/Interpol and with narcotics control officers of other countries.

The most abused drug in Sweden was cannabis, which was imported by illegal traffickers from countries at the eastern and western extremities of the Mediterranean. Since it was most important that those countries should control their illegal crops, his delegation welcomed the action being taken by the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control to start crop substitution projects. There was evidence in Sweden of growing resistance to cannabis by young people, and it was believed that educational campaigns had been effective. Nevertheless, there was still much abuse, as well as considerable misuse of psychotropic substances, although the problem was not increasing and might even be diminishing. Illegal drugs were arriving in Sweden through transit points in central Europe, but thanks to the help of the Netherlands police and other forms of international co-operation, it had been possible to control the traffic. Unfortunately, other traffickers quickly took the place of those arrested. Although there had been no cases of misuse of cocaine so far in Sweden, he was afraid that that development could be expected in the future, and the importance of increased vigilance could not be over-emphasized.

Evidence indicated that a number of morphine users had switched to heroin, and that trend was believed to be due to the traffickers rather than the addicts, as morphine supplies had run short and heroin yielded higher profits. It appeared that the traffickers had their distribution system carefully planned and organized.

/...

He fully understood the problems described by the Turkish representative (780th meeting), and welcomed the controls that had been introduced. It was, of course, very difficult to introduce effective controls in the face of a well-established illicit traffic system, and the United Nations should help the Turkish Government as much as it could.

In conclusion, he stressed the need to ensure better implementation of the 1971 Convention and the 1972 Protocol. At the same time, there was a case for broadening the scope of the Convention, because there were a number of substances which it did not cover.

Dr. MAS TORNER (Chile) enumerated the Chilean authorities that were engaged in combating illicit traffic, and explained that neither the coca bush nor the opium poppy was cultivated in her country and that the population did not chew coca leaves.

During 1974, measures to suppress the clandestine manufacture of cocaine and illicit traffic in that substance had been intensified, with the result that 12 clandestine laboratories had been discovered and 99.63 kilos of cocaine seized. Illicit traffic was also being vigorously suppressed, thanks to international co-operation.

The Chilean authorities were aware that the proximity of the Andean passes and the difficulty of policing them, particularly in the northern part of the country, as well as a certain laxity on the part of law enforcement services under the previous Government, had given the impression that her country was an important centre for the clandestine manufacture of cocaine destined for international trafficking. Her delegation could now state that every effort was being made to combat that evil practice, which was damaging the prestige of Chile, and that cocaine seizures had increased from 55.97 kilos in 1972 to the figure she had already mentioned for 1974.

The problem of marijuana addiction among young people existed in Chile and gave rise to the usual problems of poor school performance, anti-social conduct, the disruption of families, road accidents and so forth. She noted that marijuana was usually consumed in the form of cigarettes and in urban areas, and that seizures of the drug had amounted to 1507.571 kilos in 1974 as against 104.32 kilos in 1973. Approximately 900 young people who used drugs had been undergoing treatment in 1974. Marijuana consumption was favoured by the existence of cannabis crops, which had for several decades been grown for industrial use and now constituted the source of supply for addicts. The authorities were at present considering the possibility of introducing substitute crops, such as tobacco, and synthetic substances as replacements for hemp. Should such a course prove impracticable, the authorities would introduce legislation to prevent the use of the remains of cannabis plants in the illicit traffic. A few isolated cases of the cultivation of cannabis by private individuals had also been discovered, and she added that 14.8 g of opium had been seized from a Chilean national of Chinese origin who had been receiving opium concealed in newspapers sent from Hong Kong for personal use.

/...

The information given on page 23 of the review of the illicit traffic during 1973 concerning seizures of cannabis in Chile in 1973 corresponded exactly to the official government figures, although 715 g should be added to the figure for cocaine seizures given on page 22 of that review. Of the seizures made in 1974, 149.37 kilos of cocaine and 1406.72 kilos of cannabis had been destroyed. The authorities had detected 875 addicts, most of whom had been consuming marijuana.

The consumption of psychotropic substances had been strictly controlled by specific regulations since January 1970, and as a result of that measure, the consumption of such drugs had decreased almost to the level required for medical use. They were diverted to illicit traffic only in isolated cases, although the product "Desbutal" was causing a problem in that respect as a result of thefts from laboratories. The consumption of psychotropic substances had declined by 60 per cent during the past five years. LSD consumption was not considered a problem in Chile.

Consumption of amphetamines and barbiturates was not covered by Penal Law No. 17,934, which related only to narcotic drugs and hallucinogens. Young people who consumed amphetamines and barbiturates and were detected by the police authorities were subsequently released. There had, however, been an increase in trafficking in controlled psychotropic substances, which were sold at very high prices, and the Chilean Government was considering an amendment of the Penal Code, with a view to increasing penalties for traffickers and consumers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Negligent parents would also be liable to penalties under that amendment. Measures were similarly being taken in the field of education, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, educational seminars had been organized at various levels, and wide publicity was being given to measures taken to eradicate the evil.

Particular attention was being paid by the health authorities to the use of apparently harmless medicaments in combination with alcohol, marijuana and stimulants which could lead to addiction and they had accordingly prepared Circular No. 316 of 2 September 1974 prohibiting the sale of certain pharmaceutical substances except on medical prescription.

Chile was a party to the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. All its provisions were being implemented at the international and national levels in accordance with Chilean regulations, which would be brought into line with the Convention once that was required at the world level.

Mr. ANU BALAR bin FATEIL (Observer for Malaysia), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that there had been no major changes in the pattern of drug trafficking in his country during 1974; raw opium and occasionally morphine base were still being smuggled into Malaysia via the northern frontier. Seizures of both those drugs, however, had declined substantially in 1974, although seizures of heroin had continued to increase and had exceeded seizures of any other drug during recent years. Although the Malaysian authorities had discovered a clandestine heroin laboratory in 1973, there had been no reduction in the supply since that date. There might, therefore, be other laboratories as yet undetected or supplies from outside the country might have continued. Seizures of cannabis during 1974 had dropped by more than 60 per cent.

As far as legislation was concerned, an important amendment to the existing Poisons Ordinance had been made in respect of methaqualone, and the illegal possession of that drug now came under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, which provided for much heavier penalties.

Malaysia continued to co-operate fully with other countries on questions of international and regional trafficking. References had been made by representatives of certain Western European countries to recent developments in trafficking involving Malaysia, and he explained that, although there had been an increase in trafficking involving those countries, the Malaysian authorities were doing their best to curtail such activities. The authorities in Austria and Belgium had recently, as a result of speedy and efficient co-operation between the countries concerned, seized large quantities of heroin originating in Malaysia. The Malaysian authorities hoped that such co-operation could continue and that they would be able to identify sources of supply much more closely than in the past.

Mr. SMIDEL (Customs Co-operation Council), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that the Permanent Technical Committee, one of three technical committees established by CCC, was concerned with matters relating to Customs techniques other than valuation and nomenclature. As a result of that Committee's deliberations, it had been agreed that a working party should be established with the specific task of studying general Customs enforcement questions.

Of special interest was the activity of the Permanent Technical Committee and its working party in the area of illicit traffic in drugs. As at January 1975, 37 countries had adopted the 1971 CCC recommendation on the spontaneous exchange of information concerning illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Recognizing that Customs examinations provided the first line of defence against the unlawful introduction of contraband, including drugs, the working party had discussed the exchange of information on smuggling techniques and means of detecting and prohibiting the flow of drugs and other contraband at points of entry.

Meetings of the working party had been attended by observers for ICPO/Interpol, the Commission of the European Communities and ILO. In addition CCC observers had participated in ICPO/Interpol meetings and in regional law-enforcement conferences. The information emerging from meetings of the working party was transmitted to other law-enforcement agencies by the observer for ICPO/Interpol.

Mr. ENOLIC (Yugoslavia) said that the substantial legitimate transit and tourist traffic in his country was conducive to illicit trafficking in drugs. Cannabis and morphine base, which were mainly carried in transit through Yugoslavia, were generally seized at the frontiers, whereas LSD and psychotropic substances, which as a rule were intended for internal consumption, were usually seized in Yugoslavia itself. Control of illicit traffic at points of entry into Yugoslavia were extremely difficult because of the large number of tourists, who could not be subjected to undue delays.

In 1973, a new Act had prohibited the cultivation of opium, of which minimal amounts had been grown in Yugoslavia for a long time.

The year 1966 had been a turning-point in illicit traffic and drug addiction because, since that date, sporadic but disturbing cases of drug addiction among young people had come to light. During the period 1966-1973, there had been 357 seizures, 99 of which had involved Yugoslav nationals and 258 foreign nationals; the amounts seized had totalled 2,216 kilos of cannabis, 49 kilos of opium and 98 kilos of morphine base, in addition to a quantity of LSD and amphetamines. In that connexion, 244 Yugoslav nationals and 295 foreign nationals from 20 countries had been brought to trial.

Yugoslavia was also used as a place for storing drugs which were eventually exported to various countries in Western Europe; traffickers would bring substantial shipments of drugs into Yugoslavia in large lorries and export smaller amounts in small private cars. Although the detection of such trafficking was no easy matter, the Yugoslav authorities would not relax their efforts to curtail those activities.

Mr. EL HADEKA (International Arab Narcotics Bureau of the League of Arab States), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that hashish continued to be the most widely abused drug in Arab countries; the main source of supply was Lebanon and the main consuming country Egypt. Considerable quantities of hashish were also smuggled by land, sea and air from Lebanon to Europe and the United States of America. A certain amount was also transported by migrant workers from Afghanistan, India, Iran and Pakistan to the Gulf States, and some was cultivated in Morocco for consumption in other North African countries, a number of Western European countries and the United States.

The increase in the quantities of narcotic drugs smuggled out of Lebanon could be attributed primarily to the failure of the "Green Plan", which had caused a number of farmers in the Baalbeck and Hermel districts to give up sunflower and other substitute crops and to revert to the cultivation of hemp, despite the severe penalties, including capital punishment, provided for in the laws of the Arab countries. Those farmers who had resumed the cultivation of hemp were being encouraged by the laxity of the Lebanese security forces, which were at present preoccupied by duties connected with the state of war in the area.

During the first nine months of 1974, the Lebanese authorities had seized 1,101 kilos of hashish as against 5,009 kilos in 1973, which implied a substantial increase in the amounts passing through transit countries and reaching consuming countries. In 1974, the Libyan authorities had seized 15 kilos of hashish, as compared to 294 kilos in 1973, whereas the Egyptian authorities had seized 12,774 kilos in 1974 as opposed to 6,612 kilos in 1973. In 1974, Egypt had been the main target of traffickers, who had smuggled large quantities of hashish into the country from the north, despite the unprecedented quantities seized by the Egyptian coastguard authorities. Only 15 kilos of hashish had been intercepted in the Libyan Arab Republic as against 1,159 kilos in 1973.

Because of the large amount seized in Egypt, some farmers in Upper Egypt had begun to grow hemp under cover of legitimate crops in order to meet local demand and to take advantage of the rise in prices. The Egyptian authorities had consequently conducted successive raids on such farms and had destroyed 601,202 hemp plants.



The authorities of the United Arab Emirates had seized 52 kilos of hashish of Iranian, Afghan, Pakistan or Indian origin; some had also been seized in Iraq and Kuwait.

There had been a sharp increase in trafficking in hashish oil during 1974; 2.42 kilos of that substance had been seized from an Egyptian national in Egypt, and in Syria 57 g had been found in the possession of a Lebanese national travelling to the United States of America. The situation in Lebanon was more serious. A total of 126.655 kilos had been seized from traffickers of various nationalities who had been transporting the drug to various Western European countries, Australia or the United States.

There had been an increase in illicit traffic in opium, which was also widely misused in the Arab countries. The opium seized in Egypt, Jordan and Syria had been of Turkish origin, whereas that intercepted in the Gulf States had been produced in Afghanistan, India, Iraq or Pakistan. The Syrian authorities had seized 198 kilos in 1974 as against 35.68 kilos in 1973, whereas the corresponding figures for Egypt were 1,514 kilos and 295 kilos.

There had also been a certain amount of trafficking in heroin, cocaine and morphine. The Lebanese authorities had seized 3.5 kilos of heroin, 1 kilo of cocaine and 30 g of morphine base. The Syrian authorities had seized 1.25 kilos of those substances.

The chewing of khat leaves was confined to Yemen and Democratic Yemen, as the cultivation of khat and the chewing of its leaves were not forbidden in those countries pending the results of research by the competent bodies of the United Nations system. Although the problem had been considered a local one, the chewing of khat was spreading to other countries in the Arabian peninsula. As a result of international studies by Arab narcotics authorities, several Arab countries had included khat in the list of narcotic drugs. During the first nine months of 1974, 1,940 kilos had been seized in Saudi Arabia, most of it being carried by donkeys trained to follow paths across the desert between areas of production and consumption.

In some Arab countries, the demand for psychotropic substances had increased greatly. According to recent statistics provided by Saudi Arabia, the competent authorities had seized 12 million pills containing psychotropic substances carried by pilgrims from Chad, Nigeria and the Sudan in 1972. In 1973, the number had fallen to 620,000, but during the first nine months of 1974 the total seized had increased to almost 5 million pills, 3.5 million of which had been confiscated aboard boats coming from the Sudan. Co-operation between the law-enforcement authorities in Saudi Arabia and their counterparts in Nigeria and the Sudan had been effective in controlling that type of smuggling.

Statistics made available by Egypt and Lebanon revealed a steady increase in the use of psychotropic substances by students, drivers and workers.

Traffickers used various means to carry drugs, such as motor vehicles, small fishing boats, ocean-going vessels, trains and aircraft. Other methods included the use of double-bottomed suitcases by certain persons, frequently diplomats, and drugs were also concealed in various household appliances, such as refrigerators

and television sets. Recently, there had been a substantial increase in smuggling between Egypt, Libya and Syria by persons carrying narcotics hidden in certain parts of their bodies. In addition, hashish smugglers used the mails, oriental statues and food tins.

Certain strict law-enforcement measures had been taken at the inter-Arab level in order to deal with the increase in illicit traffic. In Jordan, Law No. 5 of 1973 had been promulgated authorizing courts martial to carry out investigations and make judgements with respect to narcotics cases. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the Minister of the Interior had, in March 1971, promulgated an administrative decree which provided for the preventive detention of persons involved in narcotics cases and which applied to non-Syrian nationals as well. The Arab countries had also created a number of national narcotics control agencies.

Those countries had expressed their concern at the resumption of the cultivation of Papaver somniferum in Turkey. The decree authorizing such cultivation would in fact increase the responsibilities of the Turkish and Arab law-enforcement bodies, and considerable importance was therefore attached to the annual meeting of the Sub-Commission of the Turkish - Syrian Mixed Border Commission. The situation also required that the Egyptian and Libyan authorities should continue their contacts through the Joint Border Commission to cope with the increased flow of illicit hashish and opium to the Mediterranean shores of the two countries.

At its forty-fourth session held at Riyadh on 6 and 7 November 1974, the International Arab Narcotics Bureau had discussed the volume and scope of illicit traffic, and had drafted a recommendation inviting its Director-General to convene a meeting of the heads of law-enforcement bodies of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic to exchange information on traffickers and to strengthen co-operation in law enforcement. It was hoped that that meeting would result in improved co-operation between the five countries concerned with a view to dealing with the rise in illicit traffic.

Mr. CHANIA (India) said that there had been no significant change in the pattern of drug trafficking in his country during 1974.

India was the largest licit producer of opium for medical and scientific purposes, and his Government would continue to apply adequate control measures to ensure the minimum leakage from the growing areas. The number of persons engaged in anti-smuggling activities had been increased. The Central Board of Excise and Customs controlled the departments of Customs, central excise and narcotics, and all the executive officials deployed by that Board had powers as narcotics enforcement officers. A number of services had been set up to ensure adequate surveillance along the sea-coast, land borders and at airports.

Parliament had introduced legislation which made it easier for the law-enforcement authorities to take suitable action against smugglers and provided for more deterrent punishments. In addition, the Government had introduced a scheme providing for special awards as an incentive to law-enforcement officials.

There was a small amount of cannabis smuggling, which had been reflected in the relevant INCO report. In that regard, he said that close co-operation existed between Indian and Nepalese Customs officials along the Nepalese border. His Government welcomed the opportunity for a special meeting of law-enforcement heads in the Far Eastern region. Furthermore, it maintained close contact with ICPO/Interpol with a view to reducing narcotics smuggling.

With regard to the comment by the Canadian representative (700th meeting) concerning the smuggling of opium from the Indian sub-continent, he said his Government would be glad to investigate the matter and to receive further details from the Canadian Government, so that it could take the appropriate action if the opium proved to be of Indian origin.

Referring to the question of hashish, he said that production had been prohibited by his Government as early as 1935; it would be happy to investigate the matter and would welcome any information from the observer for the International Arab Narcotics Bureau of the League of Arab States.

Mr. BOUZAR (Observer for Algeria), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that, since November 1974, his country had made a substantial contribution to the efforts by the international community to control illicit traffic in drugs by taking action that greatly curtailed the operations of international networks which had sought to use its national territory as a transit route. The international press had referred to that operation and had also stressed the importance of international co-operation with regard to the European and Maghreb countries concerned. He drew attention to the increase in illicit traffic along Algeria's western border and to the fact that, since the end of January 1975, the number of vehicles intercepted had amounted to one every day. The traffickers hid the drugs in double-bottomed compartments, in radiators and in the bodywork of the vehicles.

During the period November 1974 to January 1975, 3 tons of cannabis had been seized. 99 foreigners had been arrested and imprisoned, including nationals of the United States of America and various European and Arab countries. Algeria was used as a transit country and the drugs were picked up in Morocco by couriers from Europe who then crossed Algeria, entered Tunisia and proceeded to Europe through Italy or France. The bulk of the drugs arrived in the Netherlands, some of them being destined for Europe and the remainder for North America.

There was certainly an urgent need for increased surveillance and control measures by the law-enforcement bodies of the various countries concerned, and for more deterrent legislation. He wished to inform the international community, however, that Algeria could not, at the present stage of its development, afford to sacrifice any of its children and intended to protect foreign nationals who lived in Algeria and participated in the national development effort. Algeria was a transit country today; the question was what would it and other transit countries be tomorrow. While it would be premature for him to give any details at the present stage on draft legislation under consideration by his Government, it was certain that it would provide for stricter penalties against traffickers.

/...

Mrs. BERDA (Morocco) said that cannabis accounted for a significant proportion of the illicit traffic in drugs in her country. Cannabis, which was known locally as kif, grew wild in Morocco in mountainous and very poor regions, and was sold at fabulous prices to tourists from various countries.

Her Government, aware of its duties, had strengthened its law-enforcement and control machinery, which included the police, Customs and the Tobacco Board. As a result, the quantity of kif seized and destroyed had increased from 147 tons in 1973 to 245 tons in 1974. Her Government was continuing to take measures along those lines, and the production of kif at all levels was prohibited and any trafficker was severely punished.

As has been pointed out, the economic situation in her country encouraged the traffic in kif, and consideration was therefore being given to the solution proposed by the Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, namely, the development of a handicraft industry, which was suitable but which required considerable time and financial resources.

In conclusion, she stressed the need for international assistance in her country's struggle against the illicit traffic in kif in which tourists and hippies were the prime catalysts.

Mr. RAOOF ALI (Pakistan) said that new impetus had been given to his country's efforts to suppress illicit traffic in 1973, when the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board had been formed, combining a number of agencies and bodies concerned with narcotics. As a result, the activities of the police, Customs and law-enforcement agencies had been co-ordinated and had led to a substantial reduction in illicit traffic. The Board had strengthened existing laws and provided for much more severe penalties.

Referring to UNDO/Interpol, he said that his Government would be happy to devise an international system ensuring closer co-operation and the prompt dissemination of intelligence regarding illicit traffic. In conclusion, he said that it was necessary to identify the areas of demand, so that better control measures of illicit traffic could be organized.

Mr. BAYER (Hungary) said that drug abuse and illicit traffic presented no problem in his country. A few years previously, some cases of illicit traffic had been reported, but his Government had taken appropriate measures and the traffic had been suppressed.

Mr. FRANK (United Kingdom) said it was clear from the reports of UNDO and the Commission itself that the Government of Turkey had always been fully aware of the responsibilities of countries which grow the opium poppy, and he was grateful to the Turkish representative for his comprehensive report on the activities of the Turkish Government as a result of its decision to permit the resumption of poppy cultivation. His delegation was convinced that these activities would form the basis of effective controls; the Turkish Government was to be congratulated on the progress that it had made so far, which again confirmed its sense of responsibility to the international community.

The United Kingdom Government was sure that the international community in its turn would do its utmost to assist the Government of Turkey in its task.

Law enforcement agencies seized only a small percentage of the drugs in the illicit traffic, and if greater success was to be achieved in that area, the further development of international co-operation and the continued dissemination of information were essential. ICPO/Interpol played an important role in that regard, and he particularly welcomed the establishment of the Special Drugs Group, but as it could act only with the support of its member countries, it was necessary to have a single focal point in each country, to facilitate the task of disseminating information. Every move in that direction was to be encouraged. His country had welcomed the opportunity of co-operating within Europe with ICPO/Interpol at an operational level during the past year, and had found particular value in the European regional conference.

With regard to the training of law-enforcement officers, he said that the specialized local knowledge they required suggested that the Division of Narcotic Drugs had a key role to play by providing courses locally and by training officers to train others. His Government would continue to support the work of the Division in that field in every possible way.

Mr. ROLPH (United Kingdom) said that, as Commissioner for Narcotics in Hong Kong, he was able to assure the Commission that it was the long-term objective of the Government of the Territory to stamp out the illicit traffic in dangerous drugs into and through Hong Kong, and to eradicate drug abuse from the community. That was an enormous task however, because to meet the needs of the large number of addicts in the Territory, approximately 35 to 50 tons of opium and 7 to 10 tons of crude morphine substances were smuggled in annually for transformation into heroin. All these substances came from the area known as the "Golden Triangle", namely, the limitrophe areas of Burma, Laos and Thailand, which produced about one half of the world's total illicit supplies of raw opium.

Between 1965 and 1973, virtually all the opium products smuggled into Hong Kong had arrived in fishing trawlers from the general vicinity of the Gulf of Thailand and, when close to Hong Kong, were trans-shipped into local fishing boats and run ashore. In 1973, a marked change had occurred, for in April of that year, the navy of the Republic of Viet-Nam had seized a trawler carrying 6 tons of opium products destined for Hong Kong. That had been the first of many notable successes both at sea and on land in Burma, Laos, the Republic of Viet-Nam and Thailand, as a result of which the trawler traffic had been curtailed. At about the same time, the Government of Hong Kong was reviewing and restructuring its Central Narcotics Bureau and had, inter alia, started a number of long-term penetration operations. These operations had begun to show results in mid-1974, when, in July alone, 3.5 tons of opium were seized. The total seizures for 1974 had amounted to about 5 tons of opium, 600 lb of crude morphine and 200 lb of heroin. In addition, 7 clandestine heroin laboratories had been uncovered, together with two illegal laboratories manufacturing acetic anhydride - a new feature. Some 1,000 people had been prosecuted for drug offences.

The major success had come in November 1974, when the importing syndicates had begun to hijack one another's cargoes; the result had been a little assassination on one side and another and the subsequent involvement of the police force. In one large operation, about 20 of the major operators and financiers of the illicit trade had been arrested and were currently before the courts. That had brought the illicit trade virtually to a halt overnight, and what little narcotics remained in Hong Kong had risen astronomically in price. As far as the law-enforcement agencies were concerned, their task had become even harder, since there were now vast numbers of small operators instead of a limited number of large ones.

The "Golden Triangle" produced about 600 to 700 tons of raw opium per annum, so that, even if the law enforcement agencies in the Far East and elsewhere managed to seize as much as 100 tons per annum, twice as much could be found to replace it almost at once. It was thus a matter of urgent importance that measures should be taken to remove from illicit traffic channels the vast amount of opium produced in that wild, mountainous and not fully administered area. The principal method currently in use was that of crop-substitution programmes, which were a very long-term undertaking, and if no other approach could be devised the narcotics problem in the Far East would continue on a very large scale for many years to come.

Owing to the very large imports of illicit drugs into Hong Kong, which was, unfortunately, a major heroin manufacturing centre, it was only to be expected that there would be illicit exports from the Territory, particularly in view of the very high prices paid for heroin overseas. His Department's recent contacts with law-enforcement agencies abroad had revealed that heroin was exported on a well-organized and persistent basis to North America and Europe. However, the Government of the Territory was very conscious of its duty to the international community to suppress that traffic and was co-operating with all countries in its endeavours to do so. In the Far East, and in South-East Asia in particular, international co-operation had improved immeasurably in the past two years, and in that connexion, he paid tribute to all the enforcement agencies active in the area and, in particular, to those of Thailand and the United States of America.

In the Far East, a meeting of Operational Heads of National Narcotics Law Enforcement Agencies had been held at Bangkok in early September 1974 under United Nations auspices; that meeting had produced some useful results and would undoubtedly continue to do so. His Department looked forward to the forthcoming appointment of an ICPO/Interpol narcotics-oriented liaison officer for South-East Asia and the Far East region (E/CH.7/570, para. 30), and to a similar appointment by the United Nations Division of Narcotic Drugs, namely that of a United Nations regional narcotics liaison officer (E/CH.7/569, para. 36).

In 1974, the Government of the Territory had amended its Dangerous Drugs Ordinance to enable the courts to impose swingeing financial penalties on persons convicted of engaging in the illicit traffic for profit, in the hope that such penalties would render those engaged in the trade bankrupt.

A new law had recently been enacted in the Territory to control acetic anhydride, which was essential for the manufacture of heroin. Generally speaking, that chemical was difficult to control, since, in many countries, it was widely used in industry. However, as the Territory was in the fortunate position of having no industrial or any other legal use for acetic anhydride, its use had been banned outright except under licence.

He agreed with his colleague of the United Kingdom delegation that training was of cardinal importance to efficient operation. The Government of Hong Kong was able to offer training and attachments in the law enforcement field, as well as in the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, to professionals from the Far Eastern and South-East Asian region. It would also be useful if persons working in these fields in Hong Kong could be offered such attachments abroad.

Mr. MURLAN (France) said that the Secretariat review was extremely interesting, and he particularly endorsed the statement made in paragraph 54 concerning traffic in cannabis.

There were two main routes for illicit traffic in cannabis across Europe from the producing countries to the consuming markets. The first ran from south to north from Morocco through France to adjacent countries; the other, an east-west route, was from eastern countries such as Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Turkey to the same destinations. There were also some minor routes from Black Africa and from South America.

His Government had noted, however, that since 1973 consumption points for cannabis were, in a few isolated cases, situated within French territory, and that the traffickers involved were French citizens.

In the case of the south-north traffic, the normal form of transport was by land and/or sea. Cannabis resin, or more rarely marijuana, was hidden in various places in motor vehicles which arrived in France either by the land route through Spain or on board ships arriving in French ports. Of the 2,092 kilos of cannabis seized in 1974, more than a ton had been seized on board a ship at Marseilles.

Very little use had so far been made of air services on the south-north route, and although in the past cannabis smuggling along that route had been almost entirely confined to the citizens of the Maghreb countries, traffickers of European nationalities had also been apprehended in the last three years. Those smugglers usually carried only small amounts, and did not appear to be connected with the highly organized traffic.

Two or three years previously, the characteristic feature of the east-west route had been similar, namely, smuggling by land and sea. That method had not been entirely abandoned, judging from the seizures of cannabis carried out at the frontiers of Eastern and Central European countries, but it no longer appeared to affect the French frontiers very much. On the other hand, smuggling by air had assumed new proportions, and cannabis resin was often hidden in the false bottoms of passengers' luggage. The traffickers engaged in such operations, mainly Pakistanis or citizens of Middle-Eastern countries, were no longer taking direct

/...

flights from the country of production to the country of destination, but were changing planes at an intermediary airport in Central or Western Europe; as passengers in transit, they were not subject to Customs control, and could arrive in their country of destination on intra-European flights, for which Customs control was far less strict.

With regard to the smuggling of cannabis resin by sea, the only cases encountered in any substantial numbers were those involving pleasure craft from Lebanon, and some very large quantities had been discovered. It was noteworthy, moreover, that some of these cases seemed closely linked with the clandestine delivery of arms to Middle-Eastern countries.

In general, illicit international traffic in cannabis appeared to be expanding and the use of hashish and marijuana seemed to be increasing in western Europe. Up to 1972, individual seizures from addicts had amounted to one or two grammes, but at present it was no longer rare for persons to be apprehended having in their possession several hundreds of grammes of cannabis resin. Another indication of the expansion in consumption was the increase in the number and the size of seizures of cannabis sent through the post.

The number of cases in which seizures involved liquid extracts with a high content of tetrahydrocannabinols indicated that there was a danger of the establishment in the producing countries and in Europe of clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of liquid cannabis concentrate.

Dr. B. BAILEY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, as his delegation had reported in previous years, the illicit traffic problem was virtually non-existent in his country. There were some cases of thefts from pharmacies, mainly involving morphine and codeine, and occasional cases of the use of cannabis, usually involving small quantities imported by tourists, presumably for their personal consumption. The number of cases encountered had been very small, and offenders had been dealt with in accordance with existing legislation.

All dangerous drugs, including narcotics, were under strict legal control at all levels, from their production by a few specialized undertakings to their sale in pharmacies or other government-controlled institutions. The Ministry of Health was responsible for those controls, as well as for supervising the areas in which cannabis grew wild, but was assisted by the law enforcement agencies of the Ministry of the Interior, which cross-checked the producing undertakings and retailing institutions.

The pharmacopoeia was reviewed annually by the Ministry of Health with a view to removing narcotic substances which could be replaced by newer and less dangerous drugs.

Lastly, he wished to mention that relationships between the Customs services in his country and those of neighbouring countries were extremely good.



Dr. FARBY (Secretariat) said that two questions had been raised during the discussion, one about the possibility that the work of the Division of Narcotic Drugs in connexion with seizure reports might duplicate the work of ICPO/Interpol, and the other about training.

With respect to the first question, the normal procedure was for the reporting agencies to send duplicate copies of a standard form to the Division and to ICPO/Interpol. The material in the reports was used by the Division for two purposes, namely, to give some life to the abstractions of the annual country reports and to produce a quarterly summary, for the benefit of national law enforcement agencies, showing what drugs had been seized during that quarter, the quantities involved, where they had been seized, the origin of the drugs and the number and nationality of the traffickers involved. An annex to that report gave greater details concerning some 20 to 30 of the more interesting cases. The purpose of those quarterly reports was to give the law enforcement agencies information useful to them in planning their own preventive measures. They were produced by the Division on the instructions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and, if the Commission were to decide that they served no useful purpose, the Division would be delighted to abandon their production.

With regard to the question concerning training, the Division had been most reluctant to enter that area, and had done so in full awareness of its own inadequacies; however, nobody else was carrying out that vital operation at the international level. From the outset, the intention had always been to train teachers, and circulars to that effect had been sent out to most of the Governments represented on the Commission. Every person proposed by his Government for such advanced courses had been accepted, and more applications would be very welcome. There were two courses scheduled for the autumn of 1975, one in French and the other in English.

In that connexion, the Division had also held some regional courses and had organized national courses at the request of individual Governments. It was always willing to give favourable consideration to any requests for help. Apart from the training courses as such, the Division also had available considerable quantities of written, visual and audio-visual material.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

/...