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COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

Ninth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York
on Wednesday, 28 April 1954, at 2.45 p.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. VAILLE	France
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY	India
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. SHARMAN	Canada
	Mr. LIANG	China
	Mr. ISMAIL	Egypt
	Mr. PANOPOULOS	Greece
	Mr. ESFANDIARY	Iran
	Mr. RABASA	Mexico
	Mr. LAZARTE	Peru
	Mr. FORYS	Poland
	Mr. OZKOL	Turkey
	Mrs. VASILYEVA	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. WALKER	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. ANSLINGER	United States of America
	Mr. NIKOLIC	Yugoslavia
<u>Observers:</u>	Miss HOURET	Argentina
	Mr. JOHNSON	Bolivia
	Mr. VILLAMEZER	Colombia
	Mr. DANNER	Federal Republic of Germany
	Mr. GARBRIELE	Italy
	Mr. USHIROKU	Japan
<u>Also present:</u>	Mr. MAY	Permanent Central Opium Board
<u>Representative of a specialized agency:</u>	Dr. WOLFF	World Health Organization
<u>Representatives of non-governmental organizations:</u>		
<u>Category B and Register:</u>		
	Mr. LONGARZO	International Conference of Catholic Charities
	Miss SMITH	International Federation of Women Lawyers
	Mr. PRICE	Pax Romana
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. YATES	Director, Division of Narcotic Drugs
	Mr. PASTUHOV	Secretary of the Commission

THE PROBLEM OF SYNTHETIC NARCOTIC DRUGS (E/CN.7/260, 268 and 277)(concluded)

The CHAIRMAN called upon the Commission to decide whether to recommend to the Economic and Social Council, as several representatives had suggested, the adoption of a resolution in which Governments would be urged to prohibit the manufacture, import and export of ketobemidone in view of its particularly dangerous addiction-producing properties.

The Commission decided, by 13 votes to none, with 1 abstention, to make the recommendation.

Mr. WALKER (United Kingdom) explained that he had abstained because he had had no authority to agree to a formal resolution on the use of ketobemidone. However, the drug was already prohibited in the United Kingdom and he was confident that his Government would accept the Commission's recommendation.

THE PROBLEM OF THE COCA LEAF (E/CN.7/242/Rev.2 and Rev.2/Add.1, 261, 282; E/NL.1953/160)

The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of the Commission, welcomed the observers for Argentina, Bolivia and Colombia. He proposed that the Commission should consider separately two aspects of the problem of the coca leaf: the increase in exports, and the general subject of the coca-leaf chewing.

It was so decided.

Mr. LAZARTE (Peru) said that the absence of the Peruvian delegation from its previous session had been caused solely by unforeseen circumstances, since Peru appreciated the importance of the work in which the Commission was engaged. The Peruvian Government was fully alive to its international responsibilities and obligations and, as a member of the Commission, was determined to co-operate fully in the application of measures designed to solve the problem of the use and abuse of

narcotic drugs. In that connexion, the Commission was aware of the legislation enacted in Peru concerning narcotic drugs and the strict measures applied to control illicit traffic. He requested that this statement should be recorded since the Commission had particularly referred to that fact at its previous session, as was shown in document E/CN.7/262, Chapter VI.

Referring to document E/CN.7/242/Rev.2, he said that the Peruvian Government had deemed it necessary to advise the Commission of the steady increase in exports of coca leaf from Peru in recent years. Its only purpose in so doing had been to call the Commission's attention to that fact, since a country which exported coca leaf was not in a position to know the ultimate use of the raw material in the importing State. Export permits were issued only on the basis of import permits granted by the competent authorities in importing States for medical and scientific purposes.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) said that the Peruvian Government should be commended for calling the Commission's attention to the increase in coca leaf exports. He wondered whether the representatives of the Permanent Central Opium Board or WHO could shed some light on the problem.

Mr. MAY (Permanent Central Opium Board) replied that the statistics received by the Board indicated that coca leaf exports for cocaine manufacture had not increased in recent years.

Mr. LAZARTE (Peru) pointed out that exports of coca leaf from Peru for the years 1951, 1952 and 1953 had totalled 280,000 kg., 312,000 kg., and 366,000 kg. respectively.

The CHAIRMAN felt that the increase in coca leaf exports from Peru might have been the result of restrictions placed on the export of crude cocaine. There was no reason to believe that the coca leaf was not being used for the lawful manufacture of cocaine.

Mr. WALKER (United Kingdom) said that Peru, an exporter of coca leaf, should be congratulated for the initiative it had taken in bringing the matter to the Commission's attention. Moreover, the legislation enacted in Peru in 1953 (E/NL.1953/160) represented an important step forward in the control of

narcotic drugs. The problem of the coca leaf was a difficult one for the Governments concerned. The ultimate goal of the abolition of chewing and the control of production was not easy to achieve. The legislation enacted was therefore a welcome sign that the Peruvian Government had come to grips with an embarrassing and difficult problem.

Mr. ANSLINGER (United States of America) felt that the Commission should not be unduly alarmed about the increase in coca leaf exports from Peru, since the reports relating to the seizure of illicit stocks of narcotic drugs had not indicated any increase in illicit trafficking in cocaine.

He pointed out that under the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 436 E (XIV) it would be in order for the Peruvian Government to request technical assistance from the United Nations to carry out pilot projects. The United Nations would certainly give such a request favourable consideration.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Commission should take note of the documents relating to the export of coca leaf from Peru.

The Commission took note of the relevant documents.

Mr. YATES (Secretariat) recalled that the United Nations Commission of Enquiry into the Effects of Chewing the Coca Leaf, with the assistance of WHO and other interested international bodies, had in 1950 prepared an exhaustive report on the problem of the coca leaf after a visit to Bolivia and Peru, and had made recommendations to the Governments concerned. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs had discussed the report at several sessions and had found further progress difficult because of differences of views on the part of the Governments concerned. In 1952, however, following renewed consultations with the governments, the Economic and Social Council, on the Commission's recommendation, had adopted resolution 436 E (XIV) in which three recommendations to the Governments of Bolivia and Peru were made. As regards the first, namely the possibility of pilot experiments within the technical assistance schemes, the technical assistance authorities had given some consideration to the matter, as instanced in the document E/TAC/7, but no

concrete proposals had been made in the absence of requests from the Governments concerned. As regards the second and third recommendations, asking the Governments of Peru and Bolivia to take steps to limit production of coca leaves to licit consumption and manufacture, and to take measures to prevent the introduction into trading channels of coca leaves and cocaine which could form a source of supply for illicit purposes, some action had been taken, as instanced by the Peruvian legislation in document E/NL.1953/160 and other material before the Commission.

Mr. SHARMAN (Canada) said that he did not question the ultimate legitimate destination and use of coca leaf exported for the manufacture of cocaine. Substantial quantities were also exported to the United States for the manufacture of non-alcoholic beverages.

While exports of coca leaf from Peru were far smaller than exports from Bolivia, he noted that the amount exported from Peru to Argentina had progressively increased from 1950 to 1952. Since cocaine was not manufactured in Argentina, the coca leaf was probably used for chewing. He wondered whether that was the case.

Miss HOURET (Observer for Argentina) said that she would provide the necessary information at a later stage.

Mr. LAZARTE (Peru) said that the Peruvian Government was determined to examine every aspect of coca-leaf chewing in Peru, a habit indulged in by a limited group of aborigines who lived in mountainous areas high above sea level. They had chewed coca leaf for generations, unaware of its possible harmful effects.

The problem was not easily to be solved and short-term results were not to be anticipated. Obviously, the mere enactment of legislation prohibiting the habit would be ineffective; action would have to be taken in gradual stages and over a long period. The first step would be to initiate an effective educational campaign designed to convince the aborigines that coca-leaf chewing had harmful effects and should be given up. Such a campaign should include not merely objective methods but mainly psychological methods

likely to elicit the active participation of the communities concerned. Normal methods of health education could not be applied to people who had not achieved a minimum cultural and social standard. The Peruvian Government was aware of the elements of which a satisfactory campaign should consist and had already initiated an intensive educational programme in the areas within a general plan for public health. Both the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education were co-operating in the educational campaign.

A second step would be to enforce a gradual reduction of coca leaf cultivation, bearing in mind the probable social and economic results likely to be entailed by its execution. The Peruvian Government had taken various steps already, such as the establishment of the coca monopoly and the State monopoly of cocaine manufacture.

Those were merely some of the measures which the Peruvian Government had taken to cope with the problem as a whole. It would welcome any suggestions which the Commission might make, provided that they related to long-term measures to be applied gradually. It reserved the right to request the technical assistance of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

Mr. SHARMAN (Canada) said that, while he had the utmost sympathy with the Peruvian Government in its efforts to deal with the problem of coca chewing on its own territory, the export of Peruvian coca leaf under licence to Argentina for chewing purposes contributed to an analogous problem in that country. One way to rectify the situation would be to prohibit the export of coca leaf to countries other than those engaged in the lawful manufacture of cocaine.

Mr. MAY (Permanent Central Opium Board) said that the Board would read the Peruvian representative's statement with great interest and would welcome the rendering of aid by United Nations technical assistance and specialized agencies to assist Peru in controlling the cultivation of coca.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) said that he appreciated the sincerity of the Peruvian representative's statement that coca chewing could not be stamped out in a few years. It was important, however, that the Commission should decide whether coca chewing was addiction or not.

Dr. WOLFF (World Health Organization) stated that, at its fourth session attended by a Peruvian expert, the WHO Expert Committee on Drugs Liable to Produce Addiction had concluded that, while the cocaine amount ingested by individual coca chewers varied greatly, coca chewing must be classed as a form of cocaine addiction. WHO was in no doubt that coca chewing must ultimately be stamped out in common with addiction to other drugs with which the Commission was concerned. The plan to combat coca chewing outlined by the Peruvian representative was on the right lines; the present Minister of Public Health of that country had shown a thorough grasp of the subject in a monograph published some years before, to which reference was made in the bibliography he had prepared for the United Nations Commission of Inquiry.

The pilot stations for experiment referred to at a previous session of the Commission were unnecessary: all the information such stations could supply regarding the harmful character of cocaism was already known. The existence, on opposite banks of an upland river, of two branches of one tribe, one of which was well fed and well treated by the owner of the land and did not chew coca, while the other, living in less favourable conditions, did chew coca, demonstrated that the population could live and work without yielding to the habit. White workers in the mines of the Chilean uplands did not chew coca, but indigenous workers did. The present need was not for further experiment on the question of addiction, but for action.

The Peruvian representative had rightly said, however, that progress would of necessity be slow, and this was corroborated by evidence from Colombia and Argentina. Elderly coca chewers, like old opium smokers, could not be weaned from cocaism; the young, however, could be prevented by education from succumbing to it, as the Peruvian representative had said. He was sure that general co-operation could achieve a radical change for the better in the general pattern of addiction to coca and it was clear from the Peruvian representative's statement that in that country the situation was being dealt with effectively.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of France, agreed that coca chewing constituted addiction but disagreed with the WHO representative's view that new experiments would be of no value. Experiments conducted in the countries where coca was chewed would show that coca chewing was not a necessity of life under particular conditions - evidence which would be of value for educational purposes. Secondly, pilot experiments could reveal the best practical techniques

for ameliorating the situation which could be progressively applied to larger masses of the population.

Mr. SHARMAN (Canada) agreed with the French representative on the value of experiment. If, however, Peru stood in need of material or moral support from technical assistance and from other countries in its long-term plan to suppress coca chewing, it should refrain from exporting coca leaf to another country still suffering from an evil which Peru itself was trying to suppress.

Mr. ISMAIL (Egypt) agreed with the Canadian representative that limitations should be placed on the export of coca leaf from the producing countries, provided it was known that cocaine and ecgonine had been replaced in the importing countries by a non-narcotic group of cocaine substitutes.

Mr. WALKER (United Kingdom) welcomed the cautious empiricism which the Peruvian representative had shown.

With regard to the export of coca leaf to Argentina, a distinction should be drawn between a traditional habit of chewing a local product readily available to the inhabitants of a country and a habit which had to be sustained by importing the product. Since the Government could control imports, Argentina's problem was different from Peru's. The complete cessation of licit importation of coca leaf into Argentina would doubtless give rise to illicit traffic but a progressive reduction of that importation would contribute to the solution of the problem. For that reason he was glad to learn from the annex to document E/CN.7/242/Rev.2/Add.1 that the export of coca for chewing from Bolivia and Peru, which meant export to Argentina, showed a marked reduction from 1946 to 1951.

The Bolivian legislative texts set forth in document E/CN.7/282 appeared to be fiscal rather than control provisions. The principle had been established, however, that the raising of revenue from a habit in itself harmful formed an additional obstacle to the eradication of the habit. United Kingdom experience of increasing the taxation on tobacco had shown an apparently limitless willingness on the part of the public to pay higher taxes rather than reduce or abandon smoking. He had in mind, too, the case of another country in which taxation on another narcotic drug was an obstacle to the suppression of the use of the drug not only in that country but in many others.

Miss HOURET (Argentina) said that her Government had long since recognized the magnitude and importance of the coca problem, as the resolution of the Minister of Public Health of 25 February 1950 showed; that resolution (E/NL.1950/116) had taken cognizance of the harmful effects of coca chewing on the health of the inhabitants of northern Argentina and had established the Technical Coca Commission to study the effects of the drug and to promote the reform of legislation on the traffic in and use of the drug, with a view to abolishing its use. As in Peru, however, the habit of coca chewing was deep-rooted and of long standing and its eradication would take time.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) did not think that the Peruvian Government should be asked to place an embargo on the export of coca leaf. No export was permitted which was not covered by an import licence and the chewing of coca could not be stopped abruptly in Argentina any more than it could in Peru.

Mr. ANSLINGER (United States of America) observed that the Peruvian representative's statement had been encouragingly different in approach from the Peruvian views expressed at previous sessions of the Commission. He agreed with that representative that technical assistance would be desirable in overcoming the coca problem and disagreed with the view that further experiments were unnecessary.

In support of the Canadian contention, he pointed out that the opium problem offered an analogy: the prohibition by Turkey, Yugoslavia and later Iran of the export of opium to countries where it was smoked had done much to hasten the abolition of opium-smoking in the Far East. If the coca-producing countries took similar action with regard to the export of coca leaf, the abolition of coca chewing could be similarly hastened.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY (India) commended the Peruvian Government's action to abolish coca chewing. To some degree India had had a similar problem with regard to opium and had found by experience that the best course was to establish a programme for a period of years. Following its decision in 1946 to abolish opium smoking, there were now very few opium smokers left in India. In 1949 the Government had decided to abolish within ten years the

quasi-medical use of opium, which was an appreciable problem in India. Much progress had been made in the five years since the decision had been taken.

The creation of a national monopoly in a drug, which Peru was planning for coca, was always an effective method of dealing with drug addiction. Since the area of Peru was much smaller than that of India, it should be even more practicable for Peru than it had been for India to set a programme for the progressive reduction of cultivation and within a fixed term of years to abolish the use of coca except for medical and scientific purposes.

Dr. WOLFF (World Health Organization) said that his opposition to further experiment was confined to experiments designed merely to establish whether coca chewing was harmful. At a previous session the Peruvian representative had agreed that cocaism was not harmful. He was not opposed to the establishment of pilot experiments to find the best way of overcoming the problem and improving the nutrition and the social conditions of the population,

Mr. LAZARTE (Peru) agreed with the WHO representative that coca chewing constituted a form of addiction, was harmful to health and must be abolished. He saw no objection to the suggested experiments being made. They might be very necessary from many points of view, not only for Peru but for other countries. That would not mean that the measures already taken in his country would be discontinued.

With regard to the export of coca leaf to Argentina, the Canadian representative should note that the bulk of such export was not from Peru but from Bolivia. As the United Kingdom and Yugoslav representatives had pointed out, coca leaf was exported from Peru only against import licences and he doubted whether Peru could confiscate legitimate export consignments even when it suspected that they were intended for chewing. The Argentine observer had rightly said that the problem could not be solved by an abrupt prohibition; other countries probably had the same difficulty in finding a speedy solution. He did not feel that Peru could be held responsible for the continuance of coca chewing in another country.

He did not agree with the Indian representative's view that the problem could be solved within a fixed number of years in Peru or in Bolivia, though that might perhaps be true of countries such as Colombia, where coca chewing was less widespread.

The establishment of a monopoly on the cultivation of coca was an important step towards the solution of the problem, which the Government would strive to attain by every means at its command. It would be grateful for all assistance and suggestions offered.

Mr. VILLAMEZER (Colombia) expressed his country's appreciation of the work done by the Commission and by WHO to overcome the problem of coca, which was more serious than at first appeared. In Colombia it had been under study since the sixteenth century and the records of an early botanical expedition were conclusive regarding the addiction-producing properties of the drug. Successive measures had been taken to deal with the problem and a plan was under consideration which involved the re-settlement of parts of the indigenous population in collective communities where the social factors conducive to coca chewing would be rectified.

Technical assistance would greatly assist the Colombian and other Governments in overcoming the problem. Colombia was determined to co-operate with neighbouring and other countries to that end and hoped ultimately to enable a large part of the population to enjoy the full personal development hitherto prevented by coca chewing. The high value placed on human rights by the United Nations must find expression in some form of technical assistance which would provide guidance towards an effective solution of the problem.

Mr. SHARMAN (Canada) said that he would have hesitated to suggest the elimination of coca leaf exports for chewing from Peru to Argentina if their figures for 1952 had been comparable to those of similar exports from Bolivia. He adhered to his suggestion because, during the same year, much larger quantities had been exported for the legitimate manufacture of cocaine and the financial implications of eliminating the exports for chewing were practically negligible.

Mr. MAY (Permanent Central Opium Board) thought that Peru and Bolivia might with advantage study the successful action taken in India with regard to opium exports.

Mr. JOHNSON (Observer for Bolivia) said that his country's position was similar to that of Peru. It could not be expected that the indigenous population would lose the habit of chewing the coca leaf unless a long-term programme, for which technical assistance would be necessary, were undertaken. His Government was doing its utmost by introducing appropriate legislation and by a policy of encouraging other crops, such as coffee, to replace coca.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) asked what kind of experiments were contemplated in connexion with coca addiction.

The CHAIRMAN replied that a number of different areas would be selected. Improvements would first be made in the diet and social conditions of their inhabitants. Successive steps would then be to eliminate chewing, imports and production would then be eliminated successively. To rid an entire region, it would be necessary to carry out a preliminary limited experiment to find the best methods. For propaganda purposes, practical examples, based on work carried out in the country concerned, would be essential.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) pointed out that the Peruvian representative had stated at a previous session that coca chewing was not a form of drug addiction; he had now revised his opinion. He wondered whether the Commission was unanimous on that point.

Dr. WOLFF (World Health Organization) said that, according to the fourth report of the WHO committee of experts, it was a form of cocaine addiction.

The Commission took note of the documents before it on the subject of coca leaf chewings.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the preamble of the Commission's resolution on the coca leaf might recommend that the Economic and Social Council should express gratification at the efforts made by certain countries, particularly Peru, to combat that form of addiction. Economic and Social Council resolution 436 E (XIV) might then be referred to. In the operative part, the Governments concerned might be recommended to proceed under that resolution, in so far as it had as yet produced no results, as soon as possible.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN thought that Governments might also be recommended, taking into account the observations of the Argentine, Bolivian, Colombian and Peruvian delegations, to organize propaganda against coca leaf chewing.

Mr. LAZARTE (Peru) preferred the term "Health instruction".

The CHAIRMAN accepted that suggestion.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the resolution might further recommend the various producing countries to restrict the cultivation of the coca plant progressively.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN added that the resolution might recommend the countries where chewing was practised to reduce their coca leaf imports.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY (India) thought that a recommendation to the exporting countries, asking them to help the importing countries in gradually reducing imports, might with advantage be included.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) said that if imports were reduced, the same would automatically be true of exports, and that it was difficult to see what measures exporters could be advised to take. From both the logical and the practical points of view, no purpose could be served by mentioning the exporters.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of France, said that, if a country decided to reduce its imports, there would be some symbolical value and moral support in the exporting country's co-operation. Of course, for the recommendation to have any significance, the exporting countries would have to give their consent. It would, moreover, carry little weight unless supported by a large majority in the Commission.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY (India) pointed out that since 1939 many articles had remained on export restriction lists. He could not agree that exporting and importing were the same thing.

Mr. LAZARTE (Peru) agreed with the Yugoslav representative, but he did not think that the Peruvian Government would object to limiting its coca leaf exports.

The CHAIRMAN, supported by Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY (India), suggested a compromise. Exporters might be recommended to consult importers in an endeavour to reduce their exports.

Mr. SHARMAN (Canada) doubted the wisdom of coca leaf for chewing coming under the general import and export licensing system.

Mr. WALKER (United Kingdom) said that there were only two exporting countries, Bolivia and Peru, and one importing country, Argentina. The progress and appreciable reduction in coca leaf imports by Argentina went some way towards meeting the Commission's wishes and it seemed rather ungracious to pass a formal resolution on the subject.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the proposal that a recommendation should be made to countries exporting coca leaf for non-medical purposes.

The proposal was adopted by ten votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

Mr. LAZARTE (Peru) explained that he had abstained because he had thought that a recommendation to the exporting countries, but not to the importing countries, was illogical.

Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) proposed that, since the Commission appeared for the first time to agree unanimously that coca leaf chewing constituted a form of drug addiction, the preamble of the proposed resolution might appropriately state the fact.

Mr. RABASA (Mexico) said that he had not made a special study of the subject and would have to base his opinion on that of the WHO experts.

Mr. YATES (Secretariat) thought that if the opinion was unanimous or practically unanimous, it would be distinctly valuable to insert it.

The Yugoslav proposal was adopted unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that it should be stated that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Economic and Social Council resolution 436 E(XIV), local experiments could be made which should not however be allowed to delay the social campaign as a whole.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that a sub-committee, composed of the Rapporteur, the Peruvian representative and the Bolivian observer, should be asked to draft an appropriate resolution.

It was so decided.

Miss FLOURET (Argentina) said that her delegation's views would be expressed when the same subject was discussed by the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.