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**Reduction of illicit demand for drugs: consideration
of an action plan for the implementation of the
Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug
Demand Reduction**

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Note by the Secretariat

In its resolution 53/115, section II, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to examine, at its forty-second session, the proposal for an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction (Assembly resolution S-20/3, annex). The report on the meeting of the intergovernmental working group on the elaboration of the action plan, held in Vienna from 14 to 16 December 1998, is contained in the annex to the present note.

* E/CN.7/1999/10.

Annex

Report on the meeting of the intergovernmental working group on the elaboration of an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, held in Vienna from 14 to 16 December 1998

I. Introduction

A. The initiative of the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly held its twentieth special session, devoted to countering the world drug problem, in New York from 8 to 10 June 1998. At that session, the Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction (Assembly resolution S-20/3, annex). In the Political Declaration adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session (Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex), Member States committed themselves to introducing into their national programmes and strategies the provisions set out in the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and to establish the year 2003 as a target date for new or enhanced drug demand reduction strategies and programmes set up in close collaboration with public health, social welfare and law enforcement authorities. They also committed themselves to achieving significant and measurable results in the field of demand reduction by the year 2008.

2. The General Assembly, in section II of its resolution 53/115, entitled "International cooperation against the world drug problem", requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to examine, at its forty-second session, the proposal for an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, taking into account the international agreements and declarations in the area of demand reduction that had been elaborated, in particular the Global Programme of Action adopted by the Assembly at its seventeenth special session (Assembly resolution S-17/20). In the same section of its resolution 53/115, the Assembly stressed the importance of youth organizations and youth continuing to contribute their experiences and to participate in the decision-making processes, in particular in relation to the elaboration of the action plan.

3. At the informal inter-sessional meeting of the Commission held in Vienna on 17 November 1998, it was recommended that the consideration of an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction should be the central theme to be considered under the item of its provisional agenda entitled "Reduction of illicit demand for drugs". The intergovernmental working group on the elaboration of an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction held a meeting in Vienna from 14 to 16 December 1998. At that meeting, it decided to convene a second meeting in Vienna on 15 March 1999, immediately prior to the forty-second session of the Commission.

B. Follow-up action by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

4. Immediately following the conclusion of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and interested delegations initiated the preparation of an action plan during informal consultations held in New York from 11 to 12 June 1998. Based on the conclusions of the consultations, UNDCP prepared a preliminary draft of the action plan, structured along the lines of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, which was sent as an attachment to a note verbale dated 20 August 1998 from the Secretary-General to the ministers of foreign affairs of all Member States. In the note verbale, the Secretary-General requested comments and additional proposals to be incorporated in the action plan. The preliminary draft was also circulated to specialized agencies, interested intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. A compilation of comments, proposed changes and additional suggestions communicated to UNDCP was brought to the attention of the working group at its meeting held in December 1998.

II. Organization of the meeting

5. The intergovernmental working group on the elaboration of an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction was attended by representatives of the following States: Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela and Viet Nam.

6. The United Nations Development Programme was represented.

7. The following specialized agencies of the United Nations system were represented: International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Health Organization.

8. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Council of Europe, Council of the European Union, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, International Criminal Police Organization, Organization of African Unity and Organization of American States.

9. The following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were represented: International Council of Women, International Council on Alcohol and Addictions, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs) (International Movement of Catholic Students), SOS Drugs International, Vienna Institute for Development and Cooperation, World Organization of the Scout Movement and World Federation for Mental Health.

10. UNDCP served as the secretariat of the meeting.

11. The working group elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Alberto Scavarelli (Uruguay)

Vice-Chairman: Javid Chowdhury (India)

Rapporteur: Jonathan Duke Evans (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

12. The working group decided to convene a second meeting, at no additional cost to the Organization, on 15 March 1999, one day prior to the forty-second session of the Commission. It requested UNDCP to prepare a document reflecting, for each of the 16 approved objectives, the output, impact and national, regional and international actions, based on the relevant parts of a working document on the draft action plan, prepared by UNDCP. It invited UNDCP to adjust the output, impact and national, regional and international actions indicated in the working document to match the redrafted objectives.

III. Outcome of the discussion

A. Discussion on the action plan as a whole

13. The working group emphasized that while the purpose of the action plan would be to provide guidelines to implement the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, its provisions should not be prescriptive. Drug abuse affected all sectors of society and countries at all levels of development. The Declaration and the action plan should provide Member States with an overall framework for cooperation, particularly for sharing experiences and best practices, and a structure within which demand reduction programmes could be adapted to meet the needs of local communities. Furthermore, the action plan should respect cultural and religious affiliations, human rights and fundamental freedoms, national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

14. The action plan should closely follow the structure of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, as its principal *raison d'être* was to translate the content of the Declaration into practical action. It should be focused, concise, readable, easy to understand and not overly ambitious. There was agreement that the preliminary draft action plan to implement the Declaration, prepared by UNDCP, which clearly defined the output, impact and national, regional and international actions for each objective, should be used as the basis for the elaboration of the action plan.

B. Draft preamble

15. The working group agreed on the provisions of the following draft preamble on the understanding that they would be reviewed and adjusted as the preparation of the action plan progressed:

“1. In the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, Member States:*

“(a) Recognized that demand reduction was an indispensable pillar in the global approach to countering the world drug problem and committed themselves:

“(i) To introducing into their national programmes and strategies the provisions set out in the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction;”

“(ii) To working closely with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to develop action-oriented strategies to assist in the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction;

“(iii) To establishing the year 2003 as a target date for new or enhanced drug demand reduction strategies and programmes set up in close collaboration with public health, social welfare and law enforcement authorities;

“(iv) To achieving significant and measurable results in the field of demand reduction by the year 2008;

“(b) Called upon all States to report biennially to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on their efforts to meet the above-mentioned goals and targets for the year 2003 and 2008.

“2. This Action Plan is offered as guidance to Member States in implementing those commitments. Organizations in the United Nations system,** other international organizations, regional organizations and non-governmental

organizations are invited to provide support to Member States in implementing the Action Plan, according to their specific mandates and the different roles that they are to play in achieving the goals set out in the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction.

“3. The Action Plan reflects the emphasis in the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction on the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach involving demand reduction and supply reduction, each reinforcing the other, together with the appropriate application of the principle of shared responsibility. It stresses the need for services responsible for prevention, including law enforcement agencies, to transmit the same message and use similar language.

“4. The Action Plan is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**** It allows for flexible approaches to reflect social, cultural, religious and political differences, and it acknowledges that efforts to reduce illicit drug demand are at different levels of implementation in different countries.

“5. The Action Plan recognizes that progress to reduce the demand for illicit drugs should be seen in the context of the need for programmes to reduce all substance misuse. Such programmes should be integrated to promote cooperation between all concerned, should include a wide variety of appropriate interventions, should promote health and social well-being among individuals, families and communities and should reduce the adverse consequences of drug abuse for the individual and for society as a whole.

“6. The Action Plan focuses on the need to design demand reduction campaigns and programmes to meet the needs of the population in general, as well as those of specific population groups, taking into account differences in gender, culture and education and paying special attention to youth. Demand reduction efforts aimed at youth should involve youth participation.***** A participatory approach to the development of demand reduction programmes,

* General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex.

** General Assembly resolution S-20/3, annex.

*** This may include but is not restricted to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (UNAIDS), the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank.

**** General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

***** As expressed, for example, in “The Vision from Banff”, elaborated by the Youth Vision Jeunesse Drug Abuse Prevention Forum held in Banff, Canada, from 14 to 18 April 1998.

incorporating a gender perspective, should be recognized as best practice.”

C. Agreed objectives

16. The working group reviewed the objectives to be covered by the action plan. Following consideration of 33 objectives suggested by Member States, specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations, the working group agreed on the following 16 objectives:

“*Objective 1.* To develop and implement, by the year 2003, national strategies fully incorporating the guiding principles set out in the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction;

“*Objective 2.* To secure at the highest political level possible, long-term commitment for the implementation of a national strategy for reducing illicit drug demand and to establish a mechanism to ensure full coordination and participation of relevant authorities and sectors of society;

“*Objective 3.* To assess the causes and consequences of the misuse of all substances in each country and to communicate those causes and consequences to policy makers, planners and the general public in order to develop practical measures; establish a national system to monitor drug problems and trends and to record and evaluate intervention programmes and their impact on a regular basis, based on national indicators; and, taking into account existing national and regional data systems for monitoring drug problems and trends, as well as the goals and targets established for the years 2003 and 2008 in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, to work towards establishing a core set of regionally and internationally recognized indicators;

“*Objective 4.* To train planners and practitioners of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and others within the community on a permanent basis in all aspects of drug demand reduction activities and strategic programming by identifying local, national, subregional and regional human resources and using their experience in the design of programmes in order to guarantee their continuity and to create and strengthen regional, subregional, national and local training and technical resource networks; and, with the possible assistance of regional and international organizations, to facilitate the exchange of experiences and expertise by encouraging States to include drug demand reduction

personnel from other States in training programmes that they have developed;

“*Objective 5.* To evaluate strategies and activities for reducing illicit drug demand and to develop mechanisms for intercountry, regional and interregional advocacy coordination, cooperation and collaboration in order to identify, share and expand best practices and effective activities in the development and implementation of drug demand reduction programmes;

“*Objective 6.* To create an international system of information on illicit drug demand reduction by linking existing databases managed by international, regional and national organizations in order to provide a network of information on knowledge and experiences that, to the extent possible, would use the above-mentioned core set of regionally and internationally recognized indicators and to enable comparisons of national experiences to be made;

“*Objective 7.* To identify and develop programmes for reducing illicit drug demand in a wide variety of health and social contexts and to encourage collaboration among those programmes, which should cover all areas of drug abuse prevention, ranging from discouraging the initial use of illicit drugs to reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse; and should include continuing education, not only for all educational levels, beginning at an early age, but also in the workplace, the family and the community; and to develop programmes to make the public aware of the problem of drug abuse and of the full continuum of risks involved in such abuse and to provide information on and services for early intervention, counselling, treatment, rehabilitation, relapse prevention, aftercare and social reintegration to all those in need;

“*Objective 8.* To enhance the quality of programmes for reducing illicit drug demand, especially in terms of their relevance to population groups, taking into account their cultural diversity and specific needs, such as gender, age and socially, culturally and geographically marginalized groups;

“*Objective 9.* To develop research programmes at the national and regional levels in scientific fields concerning drug demand reduction and to widely disseminate the results so that strategies for reducing illicit drug demand may be elaborated on a solid scientific basis;

“*Objective 10.* To identify how different national and local institutions and organizations may contribute to efforts to reduce illicit drug demand; and to promote the linking of those institutions and organizations;

“Objective 11. To target the particular needs of groups most at risk of abusing drugs, through the development, in cooperation with those groups, of specially designed communication strategies and effective, relevant and accessible programmes;

“Objective 12. To provide prevention, education, treatment or rehabilitation services to offenders who misuse drugs, whether in prison or in the community, as an addition to or, where appropriate and consistent with the national laws and policies of Member States, as an alternative to punishment or conviction; and to provide, in particular, drug-abusing offenders held in prison with services to enable them to overcome their dependence and to facilitate their reintegration in the community;

“Objective 13. To undertake public information campaigns aimed at the population in general to promote health, raise awareness in society and improve people’s understanding of the drug problem in the community and of the need to curb that problem; to evaluate those campaigns by establishing a follow-up system to determine their impact; and to research the requirements of particular population groups, such as parents, teachers, community leaders and drug users, in terms of information on drugs and services;

“Objective 14. To develop information campaigns that are relevant and precise so that they take into account the social and cultural characteristics of the target population;

“Objective 15. To promote information, education and communication programmes for social mediators, for example political, religious, educational, cultural, business and union leaders, peer educators, and representatives of non-governmental organizations and the media worldwide, so that they may convey appropriate and accurate messages about drug abuse;

“Objective 16. To apply the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction in order to achieve significant and measurable results in reducing the demand for drugs by the year 2008 and to report on those results to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.”
