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**COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

Forty-first session

Vienna, 11-13 March 1998

Agenda item 9\*

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS FORTY-FIRST SESSION**

Rapporteur: Alberto Scavarelli  
(Uruguay)

(Item 3 of the agenda)

The rapporteur has the honour to communicate herewith the text of chapter II of the Commission's report to the Economic and Social Council.

Chapter II

**POLICY ISSUES FOR ACTION BY  
THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMME**

A. Structure of the debate

II.1. At its 1156th to 1158th meetings, on 11 and 12 March 1998, the Commission considered agenda item 3 entitled "Policy issues for action by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme".

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\* The agenda for the session is contained in document E/CN.7/1998/1.

II.2 For its consideration of item 3, the Commission had before it the report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (E/CN.7/1998/2).

II.3. The Executive Director made an introductory statement at the 1156th meeting, on 11 March 1998.

II.4. The commission began consideration of agenda item 3 at its 1156th meeting. Statements were made by the representatives of Chile, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Spain and Turkey. Statements were made by the representatives of Chile (on behalf of the States members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (on behalf of the States members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union). The observers for Israel and Saudi Arabia made statements.

II.5. At the 1157th Meeting, on 11 March 1998, statements were made by the representatives of Bolivia, China, Colombia, Cuba, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine and United States of America. The observers for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Myanmar and Peru made statements. The observer for the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior also made a statement.

II.6. At its 1158th meeting, on 12 March 1998, statements were made by the representatives of Brazil, Canada, India, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, Tunisia and Uruguay. The observers for Croatia, Ethiopia, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar and Slovenia made statements. The observer for the Naif Arab Academy for Security Sciences made a statement.

## B. Deliberations

### Policy guidance addressed to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

II.7. The Commission commended the Executive Director for his comprehensive report which highlighted the broad range of activities undertaken by UNDCP during 1997 in promoting action and cooperation at the national, regional and subregional levels. The report reflected initiatives taken to mobilize the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, the international financial

institutions and civil society in mounting an international response to the drug problem, and pointed to demonstrable success in a number of significant areas. The Executive Director was also commended for addressing his new responsibilities with vigour and enthusiasm, displaying foresight and flexibility in his approach to the issues. His strong leadership and public efforts to condemn the illicit drug industry and those who supported it had contributed to strengthening international resolve to counter the drug problem.

II.8. The Commission expressed its continued strong support for the strategy pursued by UNDCP, based on a balanced, multidisciplinary approach, in tackling the drug problem. The balanced approach was considered to be an essential prerequisite in mounting sustainable actions against illicit drug trafficking and abuse. The balanced approach should remain a cornerstone of the activities of UNDCP, despite the trend within the donor community towards the earmarking of an increasing share of contributions for activities related to the suppression of illicit trafficking. The Commission called on UNDCP to continue to assist Governments in integrating the balanced approach into the formulation and implementation of national policies and strategies in drug control.

II.9. Strong support was expressed for the further consolidation of the role of UNDCP as a centre of competence in gathering, processing and disseminating specialized knowledge and expertise in support of the adoption and implementation of policies and strategies for addressing the drug problem.

#### Treaty implementation: legislative assistance

II.10. Full implementation of the international drug control treaties, particularly the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 <sup>1/</sup>, was fundamental to the process of eliminating the threat that illicit drugs posed to the international community. As a matter of urgency, all States were urged to become parties to the conventions and to implement their provisions fully. Accordingly, UNDCP was requested to consider, as a top priority, programmes to support national efforts to implement the international drug control treaties. The Commission was informed that the European Union had recently launched an initiative to encourage universal adherence to and implementation of the conventions.

### Demand reduction

II.11. The Commission welcomed the increased focus of UNDCP on demand reduction as one of the key objectives in combating illicit drugs. Several representatives commended UNDCP for allocating increased resources for technical assistance in demand reduction and requested the donor community to support the efforts of UNDCP by allocating resources to the Fund of UNDCP for that purpose. The adoption by the General Assembly, at its special session, of a declaration on the guiding principles of drug demand reduction would contribute to the efforts of UNDCP to persuade Governments to give increased attention to demand reduction. The Executive Director and UNDCP staff were commended for developing programmes that targeted drug abuse as one of the key pillars of its strategy, and for speaking out against those who were permissive about casual drug abuse.

II.12. Referring to the concern expressed by the International Narcotics Control Board, in its report for 1997, about publicity inciting the use of illicit drugs, UNDCP was invited to develop guidelines to facilitate the implementation of article 3 of the 1988 Convention, which required States parties to that Convention to establish such practices as criminal offences. Such practices contributed to increased drug abuse among young people.

### Youth

II.13. The Commission took note of initiatives to convene two key events involving youth prior to the special session. Several representatives referred to education programmes and awareness-raising campaigns initiated by their Governments to inform youth about the dangers of drug abuse. Their Governments were giving priority to preventive measures, particularly those targeting children and youth at risk. The creation of a global network of youth programmes to prevent substance abuse would be a most important outcome of the event that UNDCP was to convene in April 1998 at Banff, Canada.

### Technical cooperation

II.14. The Commission welcomed the initiatives of the Executive Director designed to improve the capacity of UNDCP to deliver a balanced portfolio of technical assistance projects in the field of drug control. The operational capacity of UNDCP had been enhanced through decentralization of authority and responsibility to the field and redeployment of staff and financial resources from headquarters.

II.15. It was stressed that the Governments of all States regardless of whether they were labelled as consumer, producer or transit States, had a shared responsibility to address the drug problem and to support UNDCP activities. Some representatives noted that the will and commitment of recipient countries was one of the key factors in the success of any technical assistance project. In their view, UNDCP must make it a priority to assist those States which had shown concrete signs of progress in meeting their national goals, thereby furthering the implementation of the international drug control treaties. The Commission was invited to urge UNDCP to focus its assistance on States that had shown a commitment to fighting the drug problem.

### Evaluation

II.16. Strong support was expressed for the emphasis being placed by the Executive Director on evaluation of projects and the introduction of improved monitoring and reporting procedures. UNDCP should strengthen its efforts to evaluate its own programmes. In order to evaluate successes, concrete goals must be established. As several drug-control objectives were national in nature, UNDCP should assist Governments in developing their capacity to evaluate their performance and to gauge whether they were meeting their national objectives.

### Subregional cooperation

II.17. Effective cooperation at the global and regional levels was considered to be vital for countering the drug threat. UNDCP should continue to play its catalytical role in promoting regional cooperation, using the global network of memoranda of understanding as a platform for strengthening

the political commitment among States with regional affinities. Several successful joint drug-control programmes were being undertaken within the framework of regional agreements or plans of action. In that connection, the regional plan of action for the Caribbean region had demonstrated the progress that could be achieved as a result of close cooperation between UNDCP, the Caribbean States, the States members of the European Union, the European Commission, and other partner States.

### Africa

II.18. The Commission commended UNDCP for its efforts in developing a strategy for drug control cooperation in Africa. UNDCP was asked to allocate a larger share of its resources to Africa, given the urgency of assisting African States in that region in formulating and implementing drug control programmes, particularly in the field of demand reduction. Some representatives welcomed the closer cooperation between UNDCP and regional organizations, particularly the Organization of African Unity, in furthering drug control objectives in Africa.

### Afghanistan

II.19. Several representatives commended the bold initiative of the Executive Director aimed at the eradication of the opium poppy and of drug trafficking in Afghanistan. They welcomed the constructive, flexible approach based on the participation in and ownership of programmes by the local authorities. Some representatives considered that the feasibility of a large-scale programme should be carefully studied, given the political and technical uncertainties. UNDCP was invited to cooperate closely with the donor community in the development of its activities in Afghanistan.

Drug law enforcement

II.20. UNDCP was invited to continue to support the efforts of Governments to fight illicit drug trafficking, thereby furthering the practical application of the 1988 Convention. Reference was made to the need to develop strategies and to support on-going efforts to counter trafficking in synthetic drugs, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants, and in precursors, and to strengthen maritime cooperation in combating illicit traffic by sea.

Money-laundering

II.21. Combating money-laundering and ensuring the confiscation of the proceeds of drug crimes were essential tools in the fight against drug trafficking. UNDCP should continue to assist States in countering money-laundering in line with the provisions of the 1988 Convention. Several representatives invited UNDCP to expand the scope and content of the assistance provided for to member States for their anti-money-laundering activities. UNDCP was encouraged to develop activities in conjunction with the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering or regional financial action task forces where they existed.

Alternative development: elimination of the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy and coca bush

II.22. The Executive Director was commended for promoting greater attention to the issue of eliminating illicit narcotic crops, as called for in article 14 of the 1988 Convention. Several representatives expressed the full support of their Governments for the strategy of eliminating the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy and the coca bush within the next 10 years. They considered the objectives of the global plan to be realistic, achievable and worthy of endorsement by the special session of the General Assembly, as had been requested by the Executive Director. Implementation of the plan depended on the political commitment of the donor community and producer countries to ensure its success. The Commission was informed of the efforts of several Government to eliminate illicit crop and of successful ongoing alternative development programmes.

II.23. Some representatives considered that the idea of setting 2008 as a target date had many attractions, but there were several technical issues that required detailed examination before they could endorse the proposal. Other representatives were of the view that while several political and technical issues had not yet been fully addressed, such considerations should not defer UNDCP from continuing to pursue such an important objective. It was noted that an equitable scheme for financial burden-sharing was a prerequisite for the success of the initiative. Such a multilateral financial mechanism had been established in other fields, for example, the environment. A similar mechanism might be required for drug control, to facilitate the financing of the plan, through close consultation between the partners involved, particularly the donor community.

II.24. The plan could not be implemented by UNDCP alone and required coordinated funding with, and implementation by, relevant agencies in the United Nations system agencies, and international financial institutions. Mechanisms such as the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control, should be used to ensure such coordination.

II.25. UNDCP was invited to develop appropriate strategies to address the illicit cultivation of cannabis.

#### Civil society and non-governmental organizations

II.26. Many representatives expressed their appreciation for the UNDCP initiative designed to strengthen its ties with non-governmental organizations, especially those involved in demand reduction activities at the grass-roots level. They welcomed the establishment of advocacy groups in a number of countries and emphasized the need to develop a strategy involving the mass media in efforts to draw attention to the dangers of drug abuse.



#### Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

II.27. Strong inter-agency coordination was considered to be one of the most important criteria for addressing the drug problem effectively. Without close inter-agency cooperation and coordination involving a number of United Nations agencies, major undertakings such as the strategy for the elimination of the opium poppy and coca bush were not feasible. It was recommended that the System-Wide Action Plan, which had thus far had very limited operational relevance, should focus on coordination at the field level. UNDCP should also exploit new opportunities for inter-agency coordination, such as the UNDAF process. Given the nature of its operational activities, it was imperative for UNDCP to include the international financial institutions among its partners.

#### Financing the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

II.28. The Commission took note of the ongoing precarious financial situation of UNDCP which impinged on its ability to perform as a centre of expertise for drug control in a global and long-term perspective. UNDCP continued to depend on a small number of donors and was one of the United Nations funds with the lowest proportion of general purpose contributions. The fragile donor base made UNDCP vulnerable and seriously undermined its ability to initiate action to counter the drug problem at the global level.

29. The Executive Director was commended for his efforts, which had met with some success, in widening the donor base and in exploring alternative means of financing, for example, through cost-sharing arrangements in technical cooperation projects. Some Governments had increased their contributions, while others had just begun to contribute significantly for the first time. However, a larger share of general-purpose contributions was required to enable UNDCP to operate as a flexible organization and an independent centre of expertise.

30. The Commission, as the governing body of UNDCP, should pursue its efforts to ensure a greater sense of ownership of UNDCP and a more equitable sharing of the burden of financing international drug control initiatives. In that connection, reference was made to the recommendations contained in

the report of the Secretary-General on the reform of the United Nations and in General Assembly resolution 50/227, which called on funds and programmes of the United Nations system to develop new funding strategies. The Commission was asked to support the initiation of a process that would lead to a sound and predictable funding mechanism for UNDCP based on more equitable burden-sharing. Several representatives also welcomed the establishment by the Secretary-General, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/37, of a group of experts who would be invited to review such issues.

#### Special session of the General Assembly on international drug control

31. The special session of the General Assembly to be held in June 1998 was welcomed as an opportunity for Governments to reaffirm their commitment and determination to address the drug problem. On that occasion, Member States should adopt new strategies and policies and mobilize the resources needed to translate their commitment into action. Several representatives considered that the special session would provide an opportunity to strengthen the mandate of UNDCP, to increase its financial and human resources and to consolidate its efforts in combating the drug problem.

#### Notes

1/ Official records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988, vol.I. (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).