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Chairman: Mr. Hachani (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 101: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/53/3,* A/53/371-S/1998/848, A/53/380, A/53/381, A/53/416; A/C.3/53/L.2, L.3 and L.4)

Agenda item 102: International drug control (*continued*) (A/53/3,* A/53/72-S/1998/156, A/53/95-S/1998/311, A/53/129-E/1998/58, A/53/204, A/53/371-S/1998/848, A/53/382, A/53/383, A/53/416)

1. **Mr. Al-Khuraines** (Kuwait) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control (A/53/129-E/1998/58), as well as the drug control efforts undertaken by the United Nations at the regional and international levels, especially by the Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). Kuwait had long attached great importance to drug control as it had immediately understood the seriousness of the drug problem. A drug control office had been provided with adequate human and financial resources and had then been transformed into an efficient well-structured administration. Kuwait's Penal Code provided for sanctions against drug traffickers and users and persons who promoted drug trafficking. A law had been passed on the control and use of narcotics and a list of various types of narcotics had been drawn up. A decree designed to counteract the supply of and demand for narcotics regulated the import, export, production and manufacture of medicines and psychotropic substances and provided for sanctions. A royal decree with the same objective had been adopted. The Government had also established a committee that was basically responsible for coordinating private efforts with those of public bodies, promoting policies to prevent and control the use of drugs, raising public awareness about the danger of drugs, cooperating with the media and other bodies, carrying out scientific research and coordinating cooperation with relevant regional and international institutions. That committee was assisted in its task by civil society organizations.

2. Convinced of the importance of collective efforts in that area at the national, regional and international levels, Kuwait had in 1994 ratified the Arab Convention against the Illicit Use of and Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and had in October 1989 signed the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It participated actively in all

drug control training activities such as workshops and seminars.

3. **Mr. Al-Sudairy** (Saudi Arabia) said that his country shared the growing concern of States with respect to the expansion of illicit trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances, a persistent and complex problem that called for joint efforts. In particular, practical measures should be taken to implement international conventions in that field, meet commitments made at the world level and eliminate obstacles to the implementation of such conventions by certain States, especially drug-producing and drug-exporting countries. It was also extremely important for all States to tighten controls over the precursors used to manufacture drugs and psychotropic substances.

4. Saudi Arabia, like other countries, was worried about money laundering resulting from illicit trafficking in drugs, which was facilitated in certain countries by weak financial controls and the Internet. It was necessary, more than ever before, to monitor suspicious money transfers and to verify the sources of funds. It was also vital to promote international mutual legal assistance and improve the sharing of intelligence and experience, harmonize national legislation and ensure better coordination of United Nations activities to control illicit trafficking in drugs and organized crime, including arms trafficking. Saudi Arabia deplored the decriminalization of drugs, a policy which it considered contrary to religion, international law and human dignity. It welcomed the activities carried out by UNDCP and hoped that the Programme, as well as other relevant programmes, would continue to receive support from the international community.

5. **Ms. Mekhemar** (Egypt) welcomed the appointment of Mr. Pino Arlacchi as the Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the efforts he was making to coordinate the Office's activities. She commended the achievements of the United Nations in the field of crime control and in promoting criminal justice. The Organization was striving to adapt its concepts to the needs of the modern world and to support States in their efforts to achieve the objectives set forth in the Naples Political Declaration and the Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime, as well as in the resolutions adopted by the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Cairo in 1995.

6. Egypt had taken important measures to control crime, including the establishment of a legal framework that fully respected the rights of the accused, the implementation of a programme for the reintegration of offenders and the conclusion of many extradition agreements. Since international cooperation was crucial to combating

* To be issued.

transnational crime, Egypt welcomed the efforts undertaken with regard to the drafting of an international convention against organized transnational crime and wished to recommend the establishment of an ad hoc committee. It was regrettable that, despite its important role, the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders did not have sufficient funding.

7. As far as drug control was concerned, her delegation endorsed the conclusions reached at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and welcomed the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the Global Programme of Action on means of reducing the demand for drugs. Egypt had taken a number of steps to reduce drug trafficking including tightening controls on psychotropic substances and on many drug inputs, tracking drug trafficking by using more modern techniques; it had also strengthened its legislation to combat the laundering of proceeds from illicit trafficking in drugs. Egypt had also amended its legislation to bring it into line with the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (the granting of amnesty and the provision of medical treatment for drug addicts who turned themselves in to the authorities) and had taken measures to ensure that those found guilty of minor drug offences were treated in accordance with the relevant international recommendations. Egypt was also trying to eliminate the cultivation of narcotic crops.

8. Since the proliferation of light and small-calibre firearms constituted a threat to the security of States, Egypt was in favour of the drafting of a United Nations convention to combat trafficking in firearms in accordance with the decisions of the relevant bodies.

9. **Mr. Najem** (Lebanon) said that increased drug production and drug abuse made the item under consideration an international problem that States had been collectively trying to resolve since early in the twentieth century. The Arab Council of Ministers had adopted a draft convention against the production and use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Lebanon, which continued to suffer from the aftermath of the civil war, including the occupation by Israel of the Bekaa Valley, had, in conformity with its international commitments, made drug control a top priority. While it had managed to eliminate the cultivation of narcotic crops in its territory, it still needed technical and financial assistance from other countries – particularly from friendly countries which were also plagued by the drug problem – in order to establish consciousness-raising and treatment programmes for drug addicts, particularly in the Baalbek area.

10. His Government was convinced that the fight against drugs could be won provided that all States coordinated their efforts more efficiently.

11. **Mr. Rana** (Nepal) said that his country, which associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, was as concerned as other South Asian countries about the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs, and had included drug control in its ninth five-year plan. It had adopted a national drug control policy and a national strategy to reduce demand and had included provisions in that regard in its legislation in conformity with the 1961 and 1988 United Nations conventions and the 1990 Convention of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) relating to drug abuse and drug trafficking.

12. His delegation endorsed the conclusions of the Special Session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in June 1998, which had resulted in the drafting of a global strategy to combat drugs. The war against drugs must be waged with the collaboration of the entire international community, including non-governmental organizations and civil society. There was also a need to train not only the personnel responsible for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers but also those responsible for monitoring the illicit production of and trafficking in drugs. That also called for enhanced multilateral cooperation.

13. **Mr. Reyes Rodrigues** (Cuba) said that, despite international efforts, increased demand and the globalization of the world economy had created a substantial world market for illicit drugs. The decisions adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem should help to strengthen international cooperation based on respect for international law, in particular respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the non-use of the threat or use of force in international relations. Relations among States in that area should continue to be guided by the principles of shared responsibility and an integrated approach to all phases of the process from production to distribution. His delegation condemned the unilateral measures taken by States which arrogated to themselves the role of international arbiters of good conduct although the poor results achieved did not match their responsibilities at the global level.

14. At the national level, UNDCP had helped Cuba to train staff and had provided it with the necessary technical and material support. Cuba also supported the activities carried out by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in its capacity as the only independent authority with the competence at the world level to assess the efforts of States objectively. Given its geographical location at the heart of a

region that was prone to illicit trafficking, Cuba attached great importance to cooperation at all levels and had demonstrated its willingness to prevent the use of its territory as a transit point for illicit drugs. It had also concluded bilateral drug control agreements with many countries, in particular Latin American and the Caribbean countries.

15. **Mr. Nader** (Jordan) noted that, because of its geographical location, Jordan had an important role to play in the face of the growing market for illicit drugs. Despite the efforts undertaken to eliminate illicit crops, the production of and trafficking in precursors and synthetic drugs were increasing as a result of globalization. The existing conventions should therefore be adapted to the new situation.

16. His delegation endorsed the activities carried out by UNDCP as well as the conclusions of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. The Ministry of Education had incorporated into school curricula texts designed to heighten the awareness of children and adolescents to the danger of drugs. The authorities were waging consciousness-raising campaigns in collaboration with civil society organizations and the media, and were implementing programmes for the social reintegration of drug abusers. Moreover, legislation provided for heavy fines against traffickers and the confiscation of the proceeds of drug trafficking. However, the scope of the problem called for cooperation and a sharing of responsibilities at the international level.

17. **Mr. Yang Xiaokun** (China) said that the important documents adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, in particular the Political Declaration, defined the strategies and measures for international cooperation against drugs. The seriousness of the situation with respect to the production, sale and abuse of illicit drugs in the world called for the adoption of a balanced drug control strategy and practical steps to crack down on the supply of and demand for illicit drugs. The Chinese Government, which had always attached great importance to the fight against drug-related crimes, had implemented the Global Programme of Action by cracking down on cross-border drug trafficking and resolutely prohibiting the illicit cultivation of poppies. It had also intensified its efforts to raise the public's awareness of the drug problem. China was the first country to ban amphetamine-type stimulants and had always waged a resolute fight against illicit trafficking in methamphetamine. It had been implementing an export-licence system covering the controlled substances listed by the United Nations since 1993, and an import-licence system since 1996. In recent years, China had, with the assistance of INCB, successfully thwarted numerous attempts to divert precursor chemicals and stopped the smuggling of such chemicals to other countries.

18. China had actively participated in the subregional drug control cooperation programmes initiated by UNDCP and had introduced substitute crops in the traditionally opium-planting areas of the "Golden Triangle", thus boosting the social and economic development of the border areas and reducing the dependence of such areas on the drug economy. In order to achieve outright victory in the war on drugs, international cooperation must be strengthened: the principle of State sovereignty and shared responsibilities must be respected, the international strategy for drug control adopted by the General Assembly at its special session must be comprehensively implemented, and alternative development activities should be carried out with financial and technical assistance from the international community.

19. **Ms. Gil** (Israel) said that her country had recently set up a programme to raise police sensitivity to human freedoms and dignities, even in the most trying of cases, which was particularly important in a multicultural society with conflicting values. To that end, all members of the police force were required to undergo a basic training course covering professional ethics, service to citizens and use of force. An education officer responsible for ethics training had also been appointed by the Israeli police force in the 1980s, and guidelines had been set for the prevention of violence by police officers. Furthermore, the police had taken various other measures which included the screening of prospective police officers and the provision of training workshops in interrogation procedures, violence prevention, human rights and equality. The efforts of the police to implement that new approach had been praised by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. Such progress in the protection of civil rights was also reflected in the legal measures which had been adopted. The basic law on human liberty and dignity, passed in 1992, had led to new legislation in the areas of arrest and detention and aimed to reduce the number of unjustified arrests, as well as to ensure that no one was arrested without being charged, unless there was suspicion of interference with judicial processes, and to guarantee all suspects the right to see an attorney from the moment of the preliminary investigation stage. The fundamental rights of detainees and prisoners had been laid down in rulings of the Israeli Supreme Court, which had helped to maintain acceptable living conditions, including access to proper medical care.

20. **Mr. Ka** (Senegal) said that the world drug problem endangered not only the health of drug users, particularly young people, and food crops in the producing countries, but also national peace and security in the countries concerned. Africa, which was now a centre for illicit dealings in narcotics and psychotropic substances and a major supplier of cannabis on the world market, did not have the means to tackle such

trafficking singlehandedly. At the regional level, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), together with African subregional organizations, had put considerable efforts into the fight against drugs. At its summit meeting held in Yaoundé in 1996 it had adopted a political declaration and a Plan of Action on Drug Abuse Control and Illicit Trafficking in Africa. In 1993 and 1994, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had adopted resolutions representing the commitment of the Governments of the West African States to treat the fight against drugs as a regional issue of the highest importance. It had also established an anti-drug coordination unit in its executive secretariat, while at its summit meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1997 it had adopted a political declaration and a subregional plan of action on drugs, complemented by two conventions on judicial cooperation.

21. At the national level, a law against the use of and illicit trafficking in cannabis had been in place in Senegal since 1963, and in 1965 a national narcotics commission, now renamed the interministerial anti-drug committee, had been set up. Senegal had also adopted a national plan to counter drug use and illicit drug trafficking, in which the emphasis was placed on strengthening national capacities, particularly in the field of control, as well as on prevention and the care of drug addicts. It had also introduced a drugs law, drafted in cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), and had ratified the relevant United Nations conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988. Senegal opposed the decriminalization of drugs and was engaged in efforts with international institutions and their partners to implement the measures adopted in that field. In that regard, his delegation underlined the importance of the documents adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem, particularly the Political Declaration, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and the measures to strengthen international cooperation to address the world drug problem.

22. **Ms. Camara** (Guinea) said that the problem of illicit drugs continued to worsen worldwide, particularly in Africa, where, even though large quantities of drugs had been seized, drug trafficking and abuse were on the increase owing to Africa's political and economic instability, among other things. It was therefore essential to strengthen international cooperation with a view to eradicating the scourge of drugs. Her Government continued to take the necessary action in implementation of the relevant subregional, regional and international conventions, in accordance with the national plan of action which it had presented at the twentieth special session. In particular, it had ratified the various relevant

conventions and enacted legislation, and was also committed to strengthening the legislative framework for narcotics control. It further welcomed the recommendations made by UNDCP, particularly concerning the undertaking of a study on the connection between poverty and drugs in Africa.

23. Reaffirming the will of the Government and people of Guinea to pursue an unremitting struggle against drugs, her delegation appealed to the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/89.

24. **Mr. Rasheed** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the problem of the manufacture, trafficking and illicit use of drugs continued to have a negative impact on the health and development of children and to undermine their rights. Young people's health and development was an integral component of the UNICEF 1998–2000 programme priorities, which focused on a range of problems associated with drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse, young people's sexuality and violence. The activities planned in that regard would involve young people's right to information, life skills, access to education, health services, recreation and juvenile justice, the creation of a safe, supportive environment free from exploitation and abuse and opportunities for youth participation. Key strategies in that regard included national policies and planning, school-based intervention, youth-friendly health services and outreach through non-governmental organizations and the entertainment media.

25. UNICEF welcomed the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction adopted by the General Assembly at its special session on drugs, held in June 1998, and supported the focus on young people and demand reduction. UNICEF had participated in the Youth Vision Jeunesse Drug Abuse Prevention Forum organized by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in April 1998 at Banff, Canada, and had cooperated with UNDCP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the planning and organization of activities presented in parallel to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. On that occasion, the Executive Director of UNICEF had stressed that young people were not the problem and that too often their rights are not adequately taken into account or protected. UNICEF had also had the opportunity to participate in the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, which had been organized by the Government of Portugal and held in Lisbon from 7 to 11 August 1998. In cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations

Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF had helped to prepare a background paper on youth, health and development and had worked with the key partners and organizers of the Conference to ensure that the Lisbon Declaration dealt not only with illicit drugs but also with the negative effects of tobacco and alcohol.

26. In August 1998, the UNICEF office in Brazil had hosted the second meeting of the Inter-Regional Programming Group on Young People in Crisis in cooperation with UNDCP, WHO and the UNAIDS secretariat. The purpose of that meeting had been to promote national activities to protect the rights of particularly vulnerable young people and had included a focus on drugs. Finally, UNICEF would continue to strengthen its cooperation with UNDCP and its other partners and was about to embark on a major initiative with WHO, the World Bank and other partners, the primary purpose of which was the protection of young people from tobacco.

27. **Mr. Garcia Gonzalez** (El Salvador), speaking also on behalf of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, said that few issues were as controversial or had as great an impact at all levels as the one currently under discussion. The Central American countries had taken a series of joint measures to mitigate and eradicate the consequences of drug addiction in the subregion. Those measures included the formulation of regional policies, the conclusion of mutual cooperation and assistance agreements between the national bodies responsible for combating illicit trafficking in drugs, the implementation of joint operations, the exchange of information and the strengthening of judicial cooperation. The programme of action adopted at the fifteenth summit meeting of Central American Presidents, held at Guacimo, Costa Rica, in 1994, and the establishment of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, had helped to strengthen those measures. The relevant national authorities and the Permanent Central American Committee for the Eradication of the Illicit Production, Trafficking and Use of Precursor Chemicals and Psychotropic Substances and Related Crimes had been instructed to present detailed periodic reports on the progress achieved and problems encountered in order to evaluate implementation of the provisions of the Action Plan on the matter, which had been adopted at the above-mentioned meeting and reflected the priorities established at the international level.

28. With regard to demand reduction, the Central American Governments had focused on carrying out assessments and on the preliminary results of various studies conducted in the subregion, which confirmed an increase in the use of drugs by adolescents and children. For that reason, particular efforts

had been made to promote the inclusion of drug awareness and prevention programmes in school curricula and to encourage community groups to undertake consciousness-raising activities. The authorities, non-governmental organizations and civil society had worked together to combat the scourge of drugs at all levels. For example, legislative reforms had been enacted in order to combat money-laundering; the legal and judicial systems, particularly in the area of sentencing, and judicial cooperation had been strengthened; and the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America had established new guidelines for armed forces in the region during the coming millennium, particularly with respect to matters which would require those forces to carry out operations to combat illicit trafficking in drugs and international trafficking in arms and explosives.

29. At the international level, the Central American Governments had participated actively in the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as a preparatory body for the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, and in the discussions held during the session. The General Assembly had adopted a Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, a Political Declaration and Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and their Precursors and various measures on, *inter alia*, precursor control, the promotion of judicial cooperation, countering money-laundering and international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development. The adoption of the action plan on demand reduction would be of great assistance in the implementation of measures agreed upon at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

30. UNDCP should help the Central American countries to perfect a subregional information system for the collection and analysis of data on drug abuse and to develop training programmes in the areas of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Those countries should also be provided with technical advice and assistance so that they could establish specialized laboratories for drug detection or improve existing ones and with samples of drugs and their precursors and substitutes for purposes of comparative analysis.

31. With regard to measures adopted at the level of the Americas, there had been satisfactory progress towards the establishment of a system for the objective evaluation of decisions taken by States members of the Organization of American States.

32. The Central American Governments reaffirmed their commitment to resolute pursuit of the struggle against drugs, implementation of the decisions taken at the twentieth special

session of the General Assembly, to the extent permitted by their capacities and resources, and strengthening of subregional and national mechanisms, and drew attention to the need to increase international cooperation in order to achieve those goals. The Central American Governments considered that, by so doing, they were making a modest contribution to the international community's endeavour to free the world from drugs by the next millennium.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.