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Draft report*Rapporteur:* Jaroslav **Stepanek** (Czech Republic)**Addendum****Thematic debate: building partnerships to address the world drug problem****A. Structure of the debate**

1. At its [...] meetings, on [...] March 2002, the Commission considered item 3 of its agenda, entitled "Thematic debate: follow-up to the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development, adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session: (a) strengthening of sustainable alternative development programmes, including preventive alternative development, within the framework of international cooperation; experience gained in collaboration with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, other United Nations entities and bilateral technical assistance programmes regarding best practices and lessons learned in various regions; and (b) sustainability of alternative development programmes for the elimination or significant reduction of illicit drug crops: links with international cooperation and the political framework, including long-term commitment, to support (i) poverty eradication, (ii) access to markets, (iii) initiatives for the reduction of illicit drug demand, (iv) law enforcement initiatives as a complement to alternative development and (v) protection of the environment; comparative approaches and experience gained in various regions". Two panels of experts were established, one to discuss item 3 (a) and the other to discuss item 3 (b). A list of the experts on each panel is contained in annex II to the present report.



B. Deliberations

2. The panellists presented various perspectives and approaches on alternative development based on experiences and lessons learned at the national level. Key principles were identified that could contribute to strengthening sustainable alternative development. Panellists and delegates recognized that sustainability covered many aspects. In the course of the discussion a distinction was made between economic, social, political and environmental sustainability. The Commission also discussed the need for social services, the role of civil society, strengthening institutional capacity at the national, regional and local levels, political commitment to drug control and long-term financial commitment.

3. The Commission recognized that areas under illicit crop cultivation had common features. Such areas were often underdeveloped, lacked infrastructure and services and were inhabited by poor, marginalized communities. In some cases, Governments had limited control over such areas. Reference was made to the problems arising from a lack of security in some of those areas. The presence of criminal groups and possible links with terrorism was recognized.

4. There was agreement that political commitment and domestic support for drug control were essential to the success and sustainability of alternative development. Governments should participate in the alternative development process and support it through agricultural and/or rural development programmes. An institutional framework at all levels (national, regional and local) was necessary to sustain the achievements of alternative development in the long term. Several speakers emphasized the important role of religious and other leaders in supporting the alternative development process.

5. All speakers confirmed the importance of active participation of local communities in the alternative development process. Creating a sense of ownership was seen as a determining factor for sustainability. Other key words in the discussion were self-determination and empowerment. Examples were given of the important role of civil society institutions, which had become active supporters of alternative development. Reference was also made to the need to find a balance between supporting community ownership and involvement on the one hand and the capacity-building of government institutions on the other.

6. The Commission recognized the need for alternative development to take into account the specific socio-economic conditions of illicit crop growers. There was no single model for alternative development, as it needed to be adapted to the specific national, regional or even local conditions and to take into account the resources available. Several panellists stressed that alternative development was not simply crop substitution but the development of a licit economy and social infrastructure. It was stated that, to eliminate illicit crop cultivation, the focus should be not only on farming, but also on ways to create non-farm employment, for example tourism.

7. Many representatives stressed the need to integrate alternative development into poverty alleviation efforts. It was mentioned that alternative development had not always succeeded in reaching vulnerable and marginalized groups and that the failure to recognize the role of those groups had often weakened the efficiency and sustainability of alternative development efforts. Other representatives and panellists stressed that the reduction of poverty and the enhancement of economic

and social development were essential components in combating drug abuse and that the development of sustainable economic systems and of social welfare should go hand in hand.

8. There was agreement regarding the need for law enforcement to achieve sustainable reduction of illicit crop cultivation. Sustained development assistance, including in the area of alternative development, should be planned in close coordination with law enforcement. One panellist stated that alternative development should not be made conditional to prior elimination of illicit crop cultivation, nor should a reduction be enforced until licit components of livelihood strategies had been sufficiently strengthened. Some representatives considered that, without the threat of arrest or forced eradication, alternative development would not succeed; others referred to the need to establish trust and cooperation first.

9. Several representatives referred to the need for a market orientation in alternative development. When identifying alternative crops or other products, the entire production chain should be taken into account. Basic conditions for viable production chains should be in place. Some representatives indicated that the issue of accessibility of alternative development products to international markets should be considered. Some speakers referred to the need to have real demand for products, since subsidizing products would not be sustainable. Others stressed the importance of creating appropriate conditions for private investment, of growing perennial crops and of developing improved technologies for agricultural production.

10. It was emphasized that drug control was a shared and global responsibility that called for enhanced international cooperation. Specific reference was made to multilateral organizations and international financing institutions, such as the World Bank, which could play an increasing role.

11. Sustained financial support was considered to be essential to successful alternative development. Several representatives called for innovative financing mechanisms for alternative development. One representative, referring to the need to make effective use of the limited funds available for alternative development, suggested that overhead costs could be reduced. Some representatives mentioned the very limited support for the reduction of cannabis cultivation in Africa.

12. It was stated that it was important for alternative development to be part of an integrated approach to drug control and long-term planning; that approach should include the reduction of illicit drug demand and supply. It was also deemed essential that alternative development should be integrated in national development planning, including the planning of development assistance. Afghanistan was mentioned as an example of a country where alternative development should be incorporated into broader development and reconstruction efforts. Several representatives indicated that comprehensive development had social, economic and environmental aspects. The need to take into account environmental sustainability, endeavouring to conserve and make more rational use of natural resources, was mentioned.

13. Some speakers emphasized the importance of preventive alternative development, in view of the possible displacement of illicit crop cultivation. It was mentioned that preventive alternative development included economic development, environmental conservation, physical infrastructure, social infrastructure (services), drug abuse prevention, reduction of illicit drug demand, and the law enforcement aspect.

14. It was stressed that there was a need for continuous monitoring and review of alternative development programmes. There was also a need for a built-in monitoring and evaluation mechanism in projects. Evaluation should consider not only indicators of the economic impact, such as income, but also the social indicators, such as living conditions.

15. Some representatives stated that, while the value of alternative development had been recognized, its full potential had been only partially exploited. The focus should be on the identification of lessons learned and good practices. International and national organizations should consider allocating more funds to building up expertise and capacities in alternative development.

16. A proposal was made that called for a thematic evaluation of alternative development by UNDCP. That would cover alternative development programmes worldwide, implemented by national and international agencies. The evaluation would also examine the impact of alternative development in order to identify best practices and conditions for effective alternative development. Member States should decide upon the mechanism used to carry out the evaluation.
