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### Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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### Draft report

#### Addendum

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### Drug demand reduction

#### A. Structure of the debate

1. At its 1228th meeting, on 10 April 2003, the Commission considered agenda item 4, entitled “Drug demand reduction: (a) Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction; and (b) world situation with regard to drug abuse”.
2. The Commission had before it the following documents:
  - (a) Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2003/4);
  - (b) Report of the Executive Director on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in the context of drug abuse (E/CN.7/2003/5);
  - (c) Report of the Executive Director on optimizing systems for collecting information and identifying the best practices to counter the demand for illicit drugs” (E/CN.7/2003/8 and Add.1).
3. The Commission considered sub-items (a) and (b) of item 4 at its 1228th meeting, on 10 April 2003. A representative of the Secretariat made an audio-visual presentation. The representative of Argentina made a statement in relation to tables 1-6 in the annex to the report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2003/4), in which the words “Falkland Islands (Malvinas)” appeared under the column heading “Reporting in 2001, by region and country/territory”. The representative requested the Secretariat to correct



the references to “Falkland Islands (Malvinas)” in accordance with document ST/ADM/SER.A/1094 and editorial directive ST/CS/SER.A/42. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland considered that the references to “Falkland Islands (Malvinas)” in the tables presented in the annex to the report of the Secretariat correctly reflected the agreed terminology used in United Nations documents.

4. Statements on sub-items (a) and (b) of item 4 were also made by the representatives of Greece (on behalf of States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Israel, Benin, Turkey, Senegal, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Slovenia, the Republic of Korea, Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Colombia and Burkina Faso.

5. The Committee of the Whole considered item 4 (c) on 9 April 2003.

## **B. Deliberations**

### **1. Optimizing systems for collecting information and identifying the best practices to counter the demand for illicit drugs**

6. In connection with the report of the Executive Director on optimizing systems for collecting information and identifying the best practices to counter the demand for illicit drugs (E/CN.7/2003/8 and Add.1), a representative of the Secretariat presented a costed programme of work for drug demand reduction for the period 2003-2008, based on the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction.

7. Focusing on the areas of data collection, the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers and prevention, in particular prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission among drug abusers, the representative of the Secretariat first provided an overview of the progress made in each of those areas since 1998, when the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had been held. The proposed programme of work for drug demand reduction in respect of each of the areas was then outlined, with a view to giving effect to the following tasks given to UNDCP under the Action Plan:

(a) Improving national and global information systems for reporting on activities for the reduction of illicit drug demand;

(b) Facilitating the sharing of information on best practices in activities for the reduction of illicit drug demand;

(c) Supporting Member States seeking expertise in developing their own strategies and activities for the reduction of illicit drug demand.

8. The representative of the Secretariat reiterated that, to implement most of the activities in the proposed programme of work, it would be necessary to obtain earmarked extrabudgetary contributions.

9. A number of representatives, praising the report of the Executive Director for its comprehensiveness, indicated their support for the approach outlined in the proposed programme of work. Other representatives summarized the efforts to

reduce illicit drug demand in their countries with a view to achieving the goals set by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session.

10. One representative also stressed the need to put more emphasis on the issue of treatment for drug abusers, in view of the risk of that area of work being neglected by Governments and intergovernmental organizations. One representative noted that not all areas of demand reduction required the same kind of attention but that the efforts devoted to each of the areas should take into account local conditions. One representative highlighted the specific problems of countries situated near areas of illicit drug production and the need for special assistance related to demand reduction.

11. Several representatives supported the idea of identifying and disseminating the best practices to counter illicit drug demand but stressed that such practices should be tailored to the needs of different countries and be applicable to the specific drug abuse problems that each country was experiencing.

12. Some representatives reported increases in drug abuse in their countries and mentioned the issue of injecting drug abuse and the increase in HIV infection. Measures being taken to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS (and hepatitis B and C) among drug abusers were described. All Member States were encouraged to integrate HIV/AIDS prevention into their efforts to reduce illicit drug demand. One representative stressed the need to include specific indicators related to HIV/AIDS in the evaluation of such efforts.

13. One representative stressed the need to see how the proposed programme of work would translate into future action. In particular, it was stated that it was essential to evaluate the impact of primary prevention programmes (based on “no use” messages) and treatment programmes.

## **2. Report on the world situation with regard to drug abuse**

14. A representative of the Secretariat introduced item 4 (b), entitled “World situation with regard to drug abuse”. It was noted that the report of the Secretariat on the subject (E/CN.7/2003/4) was based on replies to part II of the annual reports questionnaire, supplemented by information from other sources. It was pointed out that the response rate to the annual reports questionnaire had improved compared with the previous reporting cycle but the information provided had not always been complete. A revised and simplified annual reports questionnaire and the assistance provided to countries under the Global Assessment Programme on Drug Abuse had contributed to the improved response rate. It was suggested that Member States could improve reporting by coordinating their efforts at the national level and by nominating technical focal points to liaise with the Secretariat on substantive matters.

15. The report of the Secretariat presented a summary of drug abuse trends and patterns throughout the world. It was noted that heroin abuse had stabilized in many areas, but there were worrying trends in Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the Russian Federation, such as lower ages of initiation into injecting drug abuse. It was noted that there were high levels of drug abuse in Central Asia, where such abuse was linked with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The other region showing signs of a shift from smoking to injecting drug abuse was South Asia. Cocaine had remained a major problem in the Americas, there being increased abuse of that drug in some

parts of the Caribbean and Central America and stable or even decreasing trends in North America. Cannabis had continued to be the most widely abused illicit drug: its abuse was reported to be stable or increasing in most countries. There had been some indications of an increase in cannabis-related addiction problems, as reported through treatment centres. An increase in the abuse of methamphetamines was reported in South-East Asia and there was some concern about the abuse of MDMA (commonly known as Ecstasy) spreading to other regions, such as North America and the Caribbean, while remaining stable but still widely abused in Europe. The gradual spread of the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants to broader segments of the population and the increased level of both “functional” and recreational abuse of such stimulants among high-risk groups were worrying developments.

### **3. Importance of reducing illicit drug demand**

16. Several representatives commended and expressed their support for the ongoing work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in collecting and reporting on global patterns and trends in drug abuse, and in particular global data collection through the annual reports questionnaire and the biennial reports questionnaire. The representative of Thailand emphasized the need for introducing an element on impact assessment in the biennial reports questionnaire. A number of representatives, including the representative of Turkey, expressed their appreciation for the work being done by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the framework of the Global Assessment Programme on Drug Abuse. Several representatives reported on their Governments’ ongoing data collection initiatives. Most representatives supported the call for more resources to be allocated to demand reduction activities, including HIV prevention. Some called for investigating the link between HIV and substance abuse in general, not only injecting drug abuse. The representative of Greece, speaking on behalf of the European Union, stressed the importance of continuing work in the development and dissemination of good practices, the exchange of information and the collection of data on all aspects of demand reduction; he reiterated the need for early intervention and for paying special attention to so-called recreational drug abuse.

### **4. Harmonization and coordination**

17. A number of representatives reported on their Governments’ progress in establishing central coordinating mechanisms and structures for national drug policies. Some representatives called for more collection of data from various regions and supported further work in that area, particularly with regard to the dissemination of good methodological practices, the development of partnerships/collaboration and the coordination of activities with other national and regional partners, United Nations entities and donor agencies. Some representatives reported on the creation of drug monitoring centres and new epidemiological and other research initiatives in their countries. Representatives also underlined the need to promote community involvement and to improve efforts to identify the type of persons abusing certain drugs and the reasons for such abuse, including specific vulnerabilities and risks, as well as protective factors.

**5. Treatment and rehabilitation**

18. A number of representatives stressed the need to allocate more resources to drug abuse treatment and to establish comprehensive care systems, integrating the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers and their subsequent reintegration into society as part of a “continuum of care”. The representative of South Africa called for setting aside more expertise on drug abuse treatment and more resources for use at the local level in order to reach less accessible populations, especially in rural areas. The representative of Greece underlined the importance of viewing treatment in the context of the criminal justice system.

**6. Public awareness campaigns**

19. Most of the representatives who spoke on the item informed the Commission of their Governments’ ongoing initiatives to raise public awareness of drug abuse problems. The representative of Mexico stressed the need to use innovative techniques in such campaigns and to involve young people in the planning of the campaigns. The representatives of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seychelles and South Africa reported on such public information campaigns in their countries.

**7. Youth and recreational drug use**

20. A number of representatives raised specific concerns about the increased abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular Ecstasy among youth. The representative of Spain mentioned the increased popularity of such drugs in the dance scene and a number of representatives called for new approaches to dealing with the development. Representatives stressed the importance of using peer-based techniques and youth participation in developing and implementing interventions in that setting.

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