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Joint Ministerial Statement and further measures to implement the action plans emanating from the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

Introduction

1. We, the ministers and government representatives participating in the ministerial segment of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna on 16 and 17 April 2003, reaffirm our commitment to the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, which made a significant contribution to a new general framework for international cooperation to address the growing drug problem, setting out specific goals and targets to be attained by all States by 2003 and 2008.

2. We renew our commitment to the principles established in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session¹, inter alia, that action against the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility requiring an integrated and balanced approach in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

3. We acknowledge the increased efforts and the achievements of many States, the United Nations system and other international organizations, as well as of civil society, in countering drug abuse, illicit drug production and trafficking, and that international cooperation has shown positive results. We welcome the fact that the international drug control treaties now enjoy almost universal adherence.

¹ General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex.

General assessment

4. We recognize that progress has been uneven in meeting the goals set in the Political Declaration, as also reflected in the biennial reports² of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.³ The drug problem is still a global challenge that constitutes a serious threat to public health, safety and well-being of humankind, in particular children and young people. It undermines socio-economic and political stability and sustainable development, including efforts to reduce poverty, and causes violence and crime, including in urban areas.

5. We are deeply concerned by the serious challenges and threats posed by the continuing links between illicit drug trafficking and terrorism and other national and transnational criminal activities, such as trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, money-laundering, corruption, trafficking in arms and trafficking in chemical precursors. Strong and effective international cooperation is needed to counter these threats.

6. We are gravely concerned about policies and activities in favour of the legalization of illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances that are not in accordance with the international drug control treaties and that might jeopardize the international drug control regime.

General recommendations

7. We call upon States that have not already done so to become parties to the international drug control conventions. We reiterate the importance of States parties' fully implementing those conventions and urge States parties to take all measures to safeguard the integrity of the international drug control regime.

8. We emphasize that the world drug problem must be addressed in multilateral, regional, bilateral and national settings and that, in order to succeed, action to counter it has to involve all Member States. Action must be supported by strong international and development cooperation and must be further included in national development priorities. It requires a balance between supply reduction and demand reduction, as well as a comprehensive strategy that combines alternative development, including, as appropriate, preventive alternative development, eradication, interdiction, law enforcement, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation as well as education.

9. In the spirit of the principle of common and shared responsibility, we recommend that Member States, including donor countries, as well as international organizations, continue to provide financial and technical support for the fight against illicit drugs at the international, regional and national levels and, as appropriate, to provide new and additional support, in particular to drug producing and transit countries.

² E/CN.7/2001/2, E/CN.7/2001/16 and E/CN.7/2003/2 and Add.1-6.

³ Formerly known as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

10. We continue to support the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the global coordinating body in international drug control and as the governing body of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

11. We also continue to support the role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in the global fight against illicit drugs and its exclusive responsibility to coordinate all drug control activities within the United Nations system.

12. We recommend that a sufficient share of the regular budget of the United Nations be allocated to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to enable it to fulfil its mandates and to work towards securing assured and predictable funding.

13. We support the role of the International Narcotics Control Board and call for enhanced cooperation and understanding between Member States and the Board in order to enable it to implement all its mandates under the international drug control conventions.

14. We call upon States to continue to contribute to the maintenance of a balance between the licit supply of and demand for opiate raw materials used for medical and scientific purposes and to cooperate in preventing the proliferation of sources of production of opiate raw materials.

15. We call for the issue of international drug control to continue to be included among the key priorities of the United Nations in its medium-term plan.

16. We call upon the relevant United Nations agencies and entities, other international organizations and international financial institutions, including regional development banks, to mainstream drug control issues into their programmes.

17. We call upon all actors of civil society, including the media and the private sector, to continue their close cooperation with Governments in promoting and achieving the goals set by the General Assembly, in particular with regard to efforts to reduce illicit drug demand and to deal with problems related to the transmission of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and other infectious diseases, in accordance with the provisions of the international drug control conventions.

Final remarks

18. We, ministers and government representatives, reaffirm that international cooperation and the mainstreaming of drug control efforts are indispensable in attaining our universal aspirations of international peace and security, economic and social progress, a better quality of life and improved health in a world free of illicit drugs. We therefore pledge our unwavering support to these common objectives and our firm determination to achieve them and, to these ends, we also recommend the following:

Further measures for the implementation of the action plans emanating from the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

A. National drug control strategies

1. As a reflection of the high priority accorded to countering the drug problem, most States have adopted national drug control strategies that have included the goals agreed upon at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

2. We stress that, in order to be able to further develop sound, evidence-based drug control policies, data collection and analysis and evaluation of the results of ongoing policies are essential tools.

B. Reduction in demand

3. Member States have made progress in setting up new or enhancing initiatives to reduce illicit drug demand, in dealing with prevention of drug abuse and in the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers. Many Governments have initiated special programmes targeting groups at risk, in particular drug-injecting abusers, in order to limit their exposure to infectious diseases such as the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. Civil society, including non-governmental organizations, is also playing a pivotal role in furthering measures to reduce illicit drug demand. However, drug abuse remains at an unacceptably high level. We are concerned at the rapid and widespread increase in the illicit production and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including amphetamine-type stimulants and other types of synthetic drugs, especially among children and young people. We also note that among the most outstanding difficulties faced by many States in this area are financial and other resource constraints, as well as shortcomings in areas such as appropriate systems and structures, training and multisectoral and international cooperation.

4. Special efforts are essential to achieve a significant and measurable reduction of drug abuse by 2008. States should, in particular:

(a) Further implement comprehensive demand reduction policies and programmes, including research, covering all the drugs under international control, in order to raise public awareness of the drug problem, paying special attention to prevention and education and providing, especially to young people and others at risk, information on developing life skills, making healthy choices and engaging in drug-free activities;

(b) Further develop and implement comprehensive demand reduction policies, including risk reduction activities, that are in line with sound medical practice and the international drug control treaties and that reduce the adverse health and social consequences of drug abuse. Provide a wide range of comprehensive services for the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug abusers, with appropriate resources being devoted for such services, since social exclusion constitutes an important risk factor for drug abuse;

(c) Enhance early intervention programmes that dissuade children and young people from using illicit drugs, including polydrug use and the recreational use of substances such as cannabis and synthetic drugs, especially amphetamine-type

stimulants, and encourage the active participation of the younger generation in campaigns against drug abuse;

(d) Provide a comprehensive range of services for preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases associated with drug abuse, including education, counselling and drug abuse treatment, and in particular assist developing countries in their efforts to deal with these issues.

C. Illicit synthetic drugs

5. Most Governments are aware of the growing threat posed by the continued illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and are according high priority to reducing that threat. Many countries have begun campaigns focusing on parents, youth and other groups in order to address the false perception, especially among young people, that amphetamine-type stimulants are harmless. Law enforcement agencies have been improving their capacities to counter the use of the Internet to facilitate the illicit sale of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors. Considerable progress in preventing the diversion of precursors has been made by enhancing cooperation, both with the chemical industry and at the international level.

6. States should renew their efforts, at the national, regional and international levels, to implement the comprehensive measures covered in the Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and Their Precursors.⁴ Special efforts should be made to counter the abuse and recreational use of amphetamine-type stimulants, especially by young people, and to disseminate information on the adverse health, social and economic consequences of such abuse.

D. Control of precursors

7. Many States have introduced or revised legislation on control of precursors and established procedures for the monitoring of suspicious transactions involving precursors. Significant progress has been achieved by States and international organizations through collective initiatives to prevent diversion of precursors. However, further work is required to improve international cooperation and to refine and update existing mechanisms aimed at preventing diversion of chemical precursors and at confirming the legitimacy of end-users of precursors.

8. States should further international cooperation in the implementation of article 12, on control of precursors, of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988⁵ in close cooperation with the International Narcotics Control Board and the measures agreed upon at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

9. States should support international operations aimed at preventing diversion of chemical precursors used in the illicit manufacture of cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants, by exchanging information with other States and

⁴ General Assembly resolution S-20/4 A.

⁵ See *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).

conducting timely joint law enforcement operations, including the use of controlled deliveries.

10. States should establish or strengthen mechanisms for making the most effective use of existing systems and for ensuring strict control of chemical precursors used to manufacture illicit drugs.

E. Judicial cooperation

11. States have promoted multilateral, regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation among judicial and law enforcement authorities. They have also made progress in facilitating extradition, mutual legal assistance, transfer of proceedings, maritime cooperation, protection of witnesses and other forms of cooperation, in particular by updating and harmonizing legislation. Despite these efforts, difficulties still arise in negotiating or giving effect to extradition agreements, and obstacles contained in national legislation continue to limit international cooperation, in particular law enforcement initiatives targeting drug trafficking.

12. States should strengthen international cooperation among judicial and law enforcement authorities at all levels in order to prevent and combat illicit drug trafficking. They should bear in mind its linkages to terrorism and other national and transnational criminal activities, such as trafficking in human beings, in particular women and children, money-laundering, corruption and trafficking in arms and in chemical precursors. In particular, they should share and promote best operational practices in order to interdict illicit drug trafficking, including by establishing and strengthening regional mechanisms, providing technical assistance and establishing effective methods for cooperation, in particular, in the areas of air, maritime and port control.

F. Countering money-laundering

13. States have made progress by adopting legislation that makes money-laundering a criminal and extraditable offence. An increased number of States have established financial intelligence units to support effective investigation and prosecution of money-laundering offences and have successfully frozen, seized or confiscated proceeds derived from drug trafficking.

14. Despite some positive results achieved by removing impediments to criminal investigations previously linked to bank secrecy, there is still a need for further efforts, both in this area and in reducing the risk of financial institutions being misused for money-laundering and in disrupting the movement of proceeds derived from criminal activities.

15. States should strengthen action, in particular international cooperation and technical assistance aimed at preventing and combating the laundering of proceeds, derived from drug trafficking and related criminal activities, with the support of the United Nations system, international institutions, such as the World Bank and regional development banks.

16. States should also develop and strengthen comprehensive international regimes to combat money-laundering and should improve information-sharing among financial institutions and agencies in charge of preventing and detecting the laundering of proceeds derived from illicit drug trafficking and related criminal activities and used, inter alia, for the financing of terrorism.

G. International cooperation in illicit crop eradication and alternative development

17. States have made progress, some significantly, in reducing illicit crop cultivation, through a balanced programme of eradication, alternative development and law enforcement. Successes have required long-term investment in economic development backed by technical assistance. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been established to measure the impact of such programmes. However, more efforts are needed to eliminate or significantly reduce illicit crop cultivation and to prevent such cultivation from re-emerging or from being relocated to other areas.

18. States should enhance support, including, where appropriate, the provision of new and additional financial resources, for alternative development and elimination programmes undertaken by countries affected by the illicit cultivation of cannabis, especially in Africa, of opium poppy and coca bush, in particular national programmes that seek to reduce social marginalization and promote sustainable economic development.

19. States should also enhance joint strategies, through international and regional cooperation, to strengthen, including by training and education, alternative development, eradication and interdiction capacity, with the aim of eliminating illicit crop cultivation.

20. States should encourage international cooperation, including, as appropriate, preventive alternative development, to prevent illicit crop cultivation from emerging in or from being relocated to other areas.

21. In accordance with the principle of shared responsibility, States are urged to provide greater access to their markets for products of alternative development programmes, which are necessary for the creation of employment and the eradication of poverty.

22. We recommend that adequate help be provided to Afghanistan in the framework of the comprehensive international strategy carried out, inter alia under the auspices of the United Nations and through other multilateral fora, in support of the commitment of the Transitional Government of Afghanistan to eliminate the illicit cultivation of opium poppy, and in response to the unique situation of that country. This should help the provision of alternative livelihoods and the fight against illicit trafficking of drugs and precursors within Afghanistan and in neighbouring states and countries along trafficking routes, including the strengthening of “security belts” in the region. Also, extensive efforts have to be made to reduce the demand of drugs globally in order to contribute to the sustainability of the elimination of illicit cultivation in Afghanistan. In this context, we affirm that our response to this unique situation will not detract from our commitment and resources devoted to the fight against drugs in other parts of the world.*

23. States should encourage interregional cooperation by exchanging best practices, taking into account the specific characteristics and environment of different regions.

*This paragraph was included at the request of several interested delegations including Afghanistan.