



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2004/NGO/192
10 March 2004

ENGLISH ONLY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixtieth session
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

**Written statement* submitted by the Transnational Radical Party,
a non-governmental organization in general consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2004]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The Transnational Radical Party (TRP) wishes to bring to attention of the Commission how sometimes efforts to curb illegal activities might pose an impedimento to the development of entire societies. In particular the TRP wishes to emphasize how several policies stemming from the three UN Conventions on Narcotic and Psychotropic Drugs have become an obstacle in the development of communities where the raw materials that are eventually used in the preparation of narcotics are grown.

While it is doubtless necessary to adopt and enforce effective measures to control the production, consumption and sale of narcotic substances, the TRP is concerned by the fact that also the plants utilized in the preparation of drugs suffer a regime of total prohibition.

The TRP remains deeply critical of current drugs policies all over the world as it believes that prohibition has not been able to produce the desired effects, i.e. Reduce or contain the production and use of narcotics. These considerations are made on a critical reading of the figures produced annually by the United Nations itself. The TRP believes that, after some four decades of prohibition, the time has come to reconsider the philosophical and political approach on the drug question the whole legal arsenal of the three UN Conventions is in dire need of a radical revision.

The decision to include coca bush and cannabis derivatives in Schedule I of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, has had a devastating impact on the life, tradition and culture of ethnic and religious groups all over the world. In the Andes as well as in several regions of Asia and the Caribbean, both products have been considered a basic part of local culture, medicine and cuisine, not to mention religion, their prohibition has outlawed a significant part of those communities' tradition and heritage.

In 1998, at ten years of the adoption of the 1988 convention, the United Nations General Assembly convened a special session to address the drugs question. The forum agreed on a plan of action that set 2008 as the target date for a "Drug Free World". Last year, the 46th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, far from taking into consideration the lack of progress in eradicating narcotics the world over, convened a ministerial segment where the entirety of the policies launched in 1998, were reaffirmed. Among these, there are dozens of programmes of so-called alternative development.

The United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), formerly known as United Nations Office on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP), has been active in the implementation of measures to promote alternative development in Latin America and South East Asia for many years now. Contrarily to what hoped, none of these programmes have been successful in containing the production of coca bush or cannabis. Moreover, once international aid to promote alternative crops, mainly coffee and bananas, was withdrawn those experiments failed remain active and running.

The TRP believes that prohibiting the production of coca bush and cannabis, but also opium for that matter, has proven to be a substantial obstacle in the full and sustainable development of peasants communities in the Andean region as well as in huge parts of Africa and Asia.

Furthermore, prohibition has no serious scientific grounds. The TRP urges the Commission to reach out to the World Health Organization - which in 1995 prepared a study on coca leaf and cocaine, where the legal uses of the plant were presented from a scientific viewpoint, and which in 1997 produced a paper on cannabis and its derivatives - to establish a dialogue on the possible ways to promote the alternative development of those plants. Alternative to the production of narcotic substances that is. Such a dialogue should also interest the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to finally compile a document to call for an assessment of current drug control policies in view of an evaluation of the effectiveness of prohibitionist measures.

TRP's concerns go beyond the right to development of communities in Latin America. In fact, the TRP believes that the lack of freedom to cultivate a plant that is considered sacred and that is traditionally fundamental in the culture of the Andes, and the failure of alternative development programmes, have been a cause for worrying instability and violence in the past years in the region. The TRP believes that allowing alternative development of traditional plants can not only address the legitimate demands of entire communities to live a decent and legal life, but also defuse the tensions that could lead to violent and bloody confrontations. Legally controlled production of coca leaf could also deprive guerrilla, para-military and terrorist groups from a major source of income.

Same should apply for poppy seeds in Central and South East Asia, where not only it remains the most lucrative cash crop, but also it has been, and to a certain extent still is, the major source of financing for terrorist groups. In a study issued in May 2003, by the International Monetary Fund on Afghanistan, it is said that Opium-related revenues amount to almost half of the Gross Domestic Product of the country. This, the TRP, believes, could be addressed in creating a legal market for the raw substance. The alternative development of opium could have an impact in the production of heroin.

Measures to allow a more traditional development in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, should also be paralleled by a different approach to the consumption of narcotics. The TRP believes that a balanced approach to both ends of the question might indeed trigger a much needed and awaited different control of narcotic and psychotropic substances all over the world.

The TRP hopes that the Commission will look into the issue also from the perspective suggested in this paper, with a view of initiating a more comprehensive and secular debate on the matter of drug control involving other UN bodies and specialized agencies in the exercise.

The TRP wishes to bring the Commission's attention to another situation of concern vis-à-vis development: the People's Republic of China (PRC). In the year 2001, China ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Covenant states that all peoples have the right to pursue their "economic, social and cultural development." In accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (UNDRD), government must "formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their **active, free and meaningful participation in development** and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting there from." The UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, Vienna Declaration of 1993, further recognized and established, "the right to Development, as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights."

According to the Geneva-based Tibet bureau, since 2002, China has been making claims of bringing development and modernity to Tibet's Autonomous Region (TAR). The highest authorities from Beijing and TAR officials made several statements like "Tibet has seen eight straight years of double-digit economic growth" and the "inhabitants of Tibet now have a standard of living which exceeds average for the rest of China."

Despite such claims, there has been no sign of reduction in the disproportionate level of poverty in Western China. In a report entitled "China Human Development Report, 1997 and 1999" published by United Nation Development Programme, it is stated that UNDP has consistently found that the TAR and other Tibetan areas are ranked lower than most other areas of China in the Human Development Index, which uses indicators such as education, income, and health." The same publication also reported that "Tibet is the poorest and least developed region of China with a human development index of only 0.39 placing it within the bottom 12 of a list of the world's 49 officially recognized least developed regions, between Rwanda and Maldives."

In June 2002, Xinhua, PRC's official news agency, reported that new policies had been adopted to send more government cadres, soldiers, and "skilled people" to Tibet and other western regions in order to support development. The influx of 7.5 million Chinese settlers in Tibet that out-numbered 6 million Tibetans had a dramatic economic and cultural impact on Tibetans. The level of unemployment among the Tibetan people is high- over 40% in some areas. The Tibet Information Network's research indicates that Chinese farmers make more than three times the income Tibetan farmers earn. Development project established in Tibet primarily benefits urban Chinese settlers and the poor Tibetan farmers and nomads consisting of 80% Tibet's population remain less benefited. This shows that Tibetans have neither the economic resources nor the education to compete for the new jobs and positions that the Western Development policies set up in their land.

In November 2001, the Chinese government issued a White Paper which stated that "Western Development" is improving Tibetans' quality of life and incorporating Tibetans into the "big family of China." In reality, most of the development projects established in Tibet are aimed to benefit primarily to urban Chinese settlers particularly the Chinese businessman, investors and government officials. The Tibet Information Network has reported "energy resources including hydropower and gas are being exploited primarily for use in eastern China, rather than to assist industrialization in the west." Moreover, those projects are developed and implemented without consulting Tibetans or assessing its impact on fragile environment.

China has often talked about encouraging Tibetan participation, devolving policy-making power, and the importance of real autonomy, but in practice Tibetans are totally exploited. Besides, Tibetans have no role to play in the market economy of Tibet, which is practically under direct control and command of the PRC. Since the Western Development Policy launched in June 1999, China extracted Tibet's natural resources at their own needs and channeled coal, oil, natural gas and other mineral resources into its industries in the eastern coastal region. The biggest benefit seems to go to Chinese migrants living in the region and not to the local residents "leaving the chasm between rich and poor wider than ever", according to an article of USA Today (Sept. 19, 2003).

In a recent report by the Tibet Information Network, it appears that the number of Tibetan women from rural areas working as prostitutes has increased considerably. Other observers unanimously link this change as a direct result of the existing Western Development Drive that has widened economic gap between urban and rural areas. The Network also reports that the development in Tibet only generates higher level of income in few urban centres while leaving the vast majority of Tibetans who live in rural areas in a state of stagnant poverty.

The TRP is particularly concerned by the lack of active participation of the Tibetan people in the full development of their homeland. The United Nations Development Programme should establish a direct and effective dialogue with Chinese authorities to fully and thoroughly implement its recommendations. The TRP is also particularly concerned of the lack of environmental protection which affects the livelihood of Tibetans particularly farmers and herdsmen residing in rural areas.

The Chinese government should not impede the undertaking of sustainable small-scale local projects that directly meet basic needs of Tibetan farmers and nomads. Such projects will help to uplift poor people.

The Chinese government should stop migrating Chinese into Tibet under the pretext of development. Due to substantial number of Chinese influxes into Tibet, Tibetans have been marginalized economically and culturally in their own country.

Finally the Chinese government should halt the indiscriminate extraction of natural resources, construction of railway line and dams, which has direct impact on the livelihood of Tibetans residing in and around the site area.
