



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait)

later: Mr. JATIVA (Ecuador)

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AGENDA ITEM 103: INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRAFFIC IN DRUGS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRAFFIC IN DRUGS (continued)
(A/43/3, chap. V, sect. D; A/43/91, 202, 373, 399, 423, 435, 480, 678, 679, 684 and 709; A/43/510-S/20091)

1. Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that States had to adopt drastic measures to prevent the increasing demand for drugs, and while in many countries great efforts had been made they were far from satisfactory and much more needed to be done. National efforts must be reinforced, but there should also be greater co-operation between States, as well as through the United Nations system.

2. The International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held at Vienna in 1987, had been a clear expression of the common concern felt by the international community over the problem of drugs. As regards follow-up measures, Laos agreed that efforts should be focused on combating drug smuggling, illegal demand and the rehabilitation of addicts, and in that undertaking the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had an important role to play.

3. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic had taken firm measures to rehabilitate drug abusers, and drug abuse had been almost stamped out. The Government was also determined to continue to encourage the Hmong people to put an end to the cultivation of poppy plants for local consumption, including medical use, by gradually opting for substitution crops, and with the assistance and co-operation of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, had developed a project aimed at achieving that objective.

4. Action should also focus on combating the illicit traffic in drugs, and the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic had taken resolute action in that regard. The draft convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, in order to be effective, should take into account the interests of all States and fully respect the sovereignty of States. In drafting the convention, a sense of realism must prevail and there should be no room for selfish demands.

5. Mr. JATIVA (Ecuador) took the Chair.

6. Mr. FRUCHTBAUM (World Health Organization) said that the main thrust of WHO's activities in the field of drug abuse control was towards the reduction of demand, the control of supply and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers. At the global, regional and national levels its programmes for the reduction of the illicit demand for narcotic and psychotropic substances were designed to promote a public health approach towards preventing or minimizing the harm they caused. Too few countries had adopted comprehensive alcohol and drug policies, although there was evidence of positive achievement such as the fall in alcohol consumption in France and the USSR and the decline in heroin abuse in a number of Asian countries. Australia's national campaign against drug abuse and the programme to eliminate smoking in Sweden by the year 2000 were also indications of clear

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commitments to the reduction of drug-related problems. Although the traditional way of dealing with drug abuse had been to develop separate policies for alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs, there was an argument for a more comprehensive approach to all drug-related matters in view of the fact that many people were users of more than one drug.

7. There was a clear need to recognise the impact of international influences, and the well-developed collaborative mechanisms of the law enforcement agencies were being extended through measures like extradition treaties and mutual legal assistance. However, in the health field, there were fewer examples of such co-operation, and there was an urgent need to develop comparable national data and exchange research findings, materials, personnel and experience.

8. The WHO Regional Office for Europe was co-operating with the Commission of the European Communities and the Council of Europe in a multi-country project to encourage health promotion programmes for communities; WHO had supported prevention initiatives in other countries, and collaboration was being strengthened with a wide range of non-governmental organisations, with particular emphasis being placed on improving substance abuse education for health professionals.

9. WHO recognized that, in addition to assessing the benefits and risks of psychoactive substances that could produce dependence, it was also important to encourage members of the health care profession to prescribe such drugs rationally. That required the appropriate training, which in turn depended on co-operation between national authorities, schools of medicine and other institutions, professional organisations and those involved in the manufacture and sale of the drugs. WHO was developing techniques to enhance the ability of primary health care services to respond to drug abuse problems, and central to that effort was the provision of training materials suited to the needs of community health workers in developing countries. With financial assistance from the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, WHO was producing a series of training manuals addressing different aspects of drug abuse.

10. The WHO Regional Offices for South-East Asia and the Western Pacific were collaborating with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in a project on the evaluation of drug abuse rehabilitation focusing on a number of countries where drug abuse had become a major health and social threat. In Europe, WHO had co-operated in technical meetings on the biological factors associated with drug dependence and on the management of the health problems of drug abusers in prison.

11. WHO's activities at the regional and global levels for the prevention of drug abuse and AIDS continued to be carefully co-ordinated so as to ensure the optimal use of resources. The work comprised epidemiological studies, the education of health professionals and the assessment of policy initiatives. World AIDS Day on 1 December 1988 would encourage Governments and communities, groups and individuals to talk about AIDS. WHO was stressing the importance of dialogue and communication with the aim of telling everyone that the spread of the human immunodeficiency

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virus could be halted through world-wide co-operation in implementing the global AIDS strategy. Given the close link between drug abuse and the spread of AIDS, an important aspect of World AIDS Day would be open discussion about that connection and how to break it.

12. Mr. MINET (International Labour Organisation) said that ILO had further intensified its drug abuse control activities during 1988 with the implementation of an action plan which covered vocational rehabilitation and social reintegration, drug and alcohol problems in the workplace, youth integration, and inter-agency collaboration. It also encompassed activities envisaged for ILO action by the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

13. The ILO plan focused on assisting States Members and organizations in developing and improving basic vocational rehabilitation and social reintegration policy, strategies and programmes for drug-dependent persons, the training of drug rehabilitation staff, the expansion of regional collaboration, and the analysis and dissemination of the latest developments and trends.

14. To ensure the full and timely implementation of the action plan, ILO had created at the beginning of 1988 the post of Inter-Regional Adviser on Alcohol and Drug-Related Matters, who was assisted by an associate expert provided by the Government of Norway. The adviser's task was to make ILO assistance and technical advice more readily available through the network of regional and area offices with the services of vocational rehabilitation advisers in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

15. The expansion of ILO's drug abuse control activities and the increasing attention being given to the subject by its social partners had prompted ILO to propose for inclusion on the agenda of the 1990 session of the International Labour Conference the topic of "drugs and alcohol: ILO's role and responsibility".

15. He associated ILO with comments made by representatives of other agencies concerning the difficulty for organizations in the United Nations system, and for the United Nations itself, in implementing their existing mandate, let alone an expanded mandate, on international drug abuse control with the totally inadequate resources that were made available. It was to be hoped that States Members would be sensitive to the concerns expressed about the level of resources.

17. Mr. GBEHO (Ghana) said that it was a mistake to believe that drug abuse was confined to industrialized cities in the developed countries of the West. Involvement was growing among youth even in developing countries and the most popular drugs originated in developing countries. No country, developed or developing, was immune from the ravages of that social evil. Furthermore, as law enforcement measures succeeded in some countries, new countries like Ghana found themselves being used for the transit of drugs to markets in the West. Ghana could not, therefore, look on unconcerned.

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18. Despite enormous efforts at the national and international level to control the situation, drug abuse continued unabated. It had already claimed millions of lives, weakened national economies, undermined the integrity and stability of Governments and endangered society as a whole. Unfortunately, the manufacture and export of illicit drugs was still of such tremendous economic benefit to certain countries, Governments, institutions and individuals as to make it worthwhile. In dealing with the problem, therefore, it was crucially important to pay as much attention to the economics of the trade as to the education and rehabilitation of the consumer. A truly action-oriented programme at the international level could entail helping Governments to substitute other agricultural and industrial activities for illicit drug growing and trafficking.

19. The Declaration that had emerged from the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline were major steps in the struggle against drugs. Governments and peoples must add to the international effort by adhering to the principles of the Declaration, and countries must also work out sustainable and well co-ordinated follow-up action to the Conference in order to realize its ideals.

20. The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs played an important role in facilitating the exchange of information and experience and in strengthening field work on drug abuse control. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the effort made in the Commission to make the proposed Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances a reality. The draft convention's emphasis on search, seizure and confiscation, not only of drugs but also of profits from the illicit trade, was very significant. The Ghanaian Government had already enacted a law permitting the confiscation of property proved to be linked with illicit drugs. His delegation also welcomed the provisions in the draft convention for improved arrangements for the prosecution of drug traffickers regardless of the place where their crime was committed and for greater co-operation between law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities.

21. Ghana had already benefited from the scientific and technical assistance provided by the Division of Narcotic Drugs. The programme organized by the Division, in which Ghana had participated, had resulted in a number of new methods and recommendations for future priority areas in the field of international drug control. Ghana was also grateful to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its efforts to encourage the establishment of a co-operative network in Africa. A three-country meeting was being arranged in Dakar, Senegal, in which Ghana hoped to participate actively. Information would be exchanged on the progress made in drug abuse prevention projects and the possibility considered of establishing a regional plan for drug prevention in West Africa. His delegation hoped that the expected exchange of views would touch upon the specific requirements of the African region as a whole.

22. In its campaign against drug abuse, Ghana emphasized preventive measures, including educational programmes aimed especially at young people and rural dwellers. The educational programme was coupled with programmes for the

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rehabilitation of drug addicts and their reintegration into society. Those efforts would be greatly enhanced if they could be complemented by an equally vigorous programme to encourage producers to abandon the growing and manufacturing of drugs.

23. In conclusion, he drew attention to the plight of the otherwise innocent developing countries currently serving as transit States for drug traffickers. Such a situation was developing in Ghana, which was not proud of the distinction. Most transit States were chosen by traffickers largely because they lacked the sophisticated equipment needed for effective detection and control. Unfortunately, in most cases, the nationals of those countries became acquainted with those dangerous drugs. Developing countries needed international assistance to enable them to acquire and maintain effective modern equipment. It was important that known transit States should be able to reinforce any measures taken at the international level to track down traffickers. To discharge their portion of the international responsibility they needed the resources to do it. Ghana was prepared to do its part, especially if it could be given help with the resources needed for the purpose.

24. Mr. PRATOMO (Indonesia) said that the problem of illicit trafficking and drug abuse must be resolved by the whole international community. None of its members had the capacity to take effective action alone and none was immune from the tragic consequences. Control efforts would require sustained comprehensive action characterised by co-operation and co-ordination. The International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking had been a significant step in that direction. The resolve to take concerted multidisciplinary action had been expressed in a Declaration and a framework had been adopted for consolidated activities, the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline. However, the problem showed no signs of abating. It had already reached such endemic proportions that the situation could be expected to deteriorate further before it could be halted and reversed. It was essential to maintain the political commitment enshrined in the Declaration and to press on with the implementation of the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline.

25. As the principal body in the United Nations system for policy-making in drug control, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had a central role to play in following up the Conference. The Economic and Social Council had also suggested a number of follow-up activities by the United Nations system and other international organizations (resolution 1988/9).

26. The Secretary-General's report on the Conference (A/43/679) drew attention to the wide gap between the resources of the United Nations system and the actions that would be required to implement the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline. His delegation looked forward to the outcome of the attempt to quantify the level of resources now allocated by two of the main specialised agencies for drug abuse control programmes and the actual amount of resources that would be needed to carry out the activities recommended by the Conference. The United Nations financial crisis continued to hamper efforts to mobilize the means needed to give full force to the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline. However, through increased co-operation and co-ordination of activities within the system and among Member

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States, and with contributions from external sources, it should be possible to maximise the limited resources and bring them into sharper focus.

27. Substantial progress had been made towards a new convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The open-ended intergovernmental expert group set up to consider the draft convention had worked well. The review group convened in Vienna from 27 June to 8 July of 1988 had formulated an agenda and rules of procedure for the forthcoming plenipotentiary conference. The convention would be a significant supplement to the existing international legal framework for combating illicit trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances and it was to be hoped there would be widespread support for its ratification.

28. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1988/9, had requested the Secretary-General, on the adoption of the Convention, to convene a second interregional meeting of Heads of National Law Enforcement Agencies with a view to promoting co-operation in its implementation. He noted that the necessary arrangements were being made to convene such a meeting in Vienna from 11 to 15 September 1989 (A/43/679). In view of the success of the first meeting, the Council had decided, in resolution 1988/15, to hold regional meetings of the Heads of National Law Enforcement Agencies annually, except in those years when interregional meetings were to be convened. A meeting for the Asian and Pacific region was to be held in Bangkok in October 1988.

29. Ultimately, the illicit narcotics problem must be dealt with at the national level. Indonesia had recently drawn up a national plan for comprehensive multidisciplinary activities in the control of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in narcotics, psychotropic and other addictive substances. Based upon the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline, the national plan was a cross-sectoral comprehensive approach, addressing both supply and demand. It was inspired by the belief that measures to combat illicit trafficking could be effective only if due consideration was given to the relationship between illicit drug production and abuse and prevailing economic and social conditions. The role of the family, educators and other opinion-makers was recognized as crucial in helping to reduce demand. Furthermore, for a just and successful solution, rehabilitation, to enable drug abusers to return as productive members to society, must be one of the central aspects of drug control efforts. At the subregional level, Indonesia continued to attach great importance to the work being done within the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to implement a co-ordinated policy and strategy to combat illicit trafficking. As a transit country, Indonesia was constantly seeking ways and means to enhance its capacity to prevent the flow of drugs through co-operation with its neighbours.

30. Mr. GALINO (Director, Division of Narcotic Drugs) said that the fact that there had been some 60 speakers in the general debate, some speaking on behalf of several delegations, was proof, if any was needed, that illicit trafficking and drug abuse was a universal problem that demanded concerted and universal countermeasures. The most effective immediate action would undoubtedly be the

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forthcoming Conference of Plenipotentiaries to be held in Vienna from 25 November to 20 December 1988 to adopt a new convention against the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. That convention must be at the same time balanced, effective, universally acceptable and universally applied. It must entail a binding commitment at the universal level to seize property derived from drug trafficking and to facilitate the extradition of traffickers. It must provide for the imposition of penalties that were truly dissuasive and for the eradication of illicit production as well as control over the basic chemical products used in the manufacture of narcotics and psychotropic substances. The land, sea and air passage of drugs must be interdicted, and consideration given to the special circumstances of the transit countries. Rules must also be laid down for mutual legal and judicial assistance.

31. All those measures, and more besides must be incorporated in a convention which the Conference would have only 18 working days to complete. Thus, questions of organization became very important. In response to the questions asked by the representative of Bolivia, he said that, of the four documents prepared by the Division of Narcotic Drugs, only document A/CONF.82/3, the report of the Review meeting in Vienna from 27 June to 8 July, had already been distributed. The others, the provisional agenda, rules of procedure and provisional organization of work, would be available shortly. The registration of delegations would start at 3 p.m. on Monday, 21 November, in Vienna. The list of speakers in the general debate would open on 1 November and the debate itself would take place on the afternoon of Friday, the 25th, and on Saturday, the 26th. He urged Member States to inform the Secretariat of the composition of their delegations to the Conference as soon as possible. Since it was to be a Conference of Plenipotentiaries, there would be a Credentials Committee to examine the credentials of representatives, which would need to bear the signature of the Head of State or Government or the Foreign Minister of the country concerned. The Review Group had decided that the Secretary-General should put out a provisional calendar for the Conference three weeks before the opening date and that calendar had now been published in Vienna.

32. The Convention itself would, it was hoped, be adopted by consensus, but it would presumably be necessary for votes to be taken on the many textual variants and individual paragraphs. It would be virtually impossible to reach a consensus on all points in the time available. The substantive discussion of the various articles should start on Monday, 28 November, after the general debate, which was expected to be non-controversial. The Review Group had recommended that articles 1 to 6 of the draft convention should be considered in plenary and the rest, including the preamble and the final clauses, should be sent to sub-committees. According to the provisional rules of procedure, the sub-committees would be required to report to the plenary from time to time on the state of their work. That might, however, entail a danger that matters agreed on in sub-committee would be rediscussed in plenary and time would be wasted. Pre-conference consultations were to be held on 23 November and it would be useful to decide then that any articles agreed on by a sub-committee and sent to the plenary should be forwarded immediately to the drafting committee without a discussion, the debate being reopened only if absolutely necessary. It had also been suggested that a committee of the whole should work alongside the plenary on the first group of articles.

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33. He was glad to report that through redeployment of its resources the Secretariat had obtained a third team of interpreters which would make it possible to hold, in addition to the regular four meetings a day, meetings of working groups and similar bodies on specific controversial points. The last two days of the Conference, 19 and 20 December, would be reserved for the preparation of the final consolidated text and its signature by the heads of delegations or their authorized representatives. Consequently, the Conference would have only 16 working days in which to decide on a text that was satisfactory to all and that could be adopted by consensus. If a consensus could not be achieved, the General Committee would have to decide what course to take. The rules of procedure provided for adoption by a two-thirds majority.

34. The preparation in less than four weeks of so complex and innovative a Convention would not be an easy task. After listening to the general debate in the Third Committee, however, he was convinced that the political will manifested there would find a way to adopt by consensus an effective convention that could be universally accepted and applied.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.