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Draft report

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Addendum

Strengthening the crime programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as its governing body, including administrative, strategic management and budgetary questions

1. At its 8th meeting, on 26 April 2007, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice considered agenda item 7, entitled “Strengthening the crime programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as its governing body, including administrative, strategic management and budgetary questions”. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Executive Director on the outline of the consolidated budget for the biennium 2008-2009 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (E/CN.7/2007/12-E/CN.15/2007/15);

(b) Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the outline of the consolidated budget for the biennium 2008-2009 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (E/CN.7/2007/13-E/CN.15/2007/13);

(c) Note by the Secretariat on the strategy for the period 2008-2011 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (E/CN.7/2007/14-E/CN.15/2007/5);

(d) Note by the Secretariat on the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment (E/CN.7/2007/15-E/CN.15/2007/10);

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(e) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment (A/61/583).

2. The Director of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs and the Director of the Division for Management made introductory statements. The Commission heard statements by the representative of Germany (on behalf of the European Union) and the observer for Peru (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States). A statement was made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the International Organization of la Francophonie. Statements were also made by the representatives of Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. Statements were also made by the observers for Cuba, Australia and Norway.

Deliberations

3. In their introductory statements, the representatives of UNODC referred to the report of the Independent Evaluation Unit on support mechanisms for technical cooperation, the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the inspection of programme and administrative management in UNODC, and management responses thereto.

4. Several speakers welcomed the adoption of the strategy for the period 2008-2011 for UNODC, the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment (A/61/583) and General Assembly resolution 61/252 of 22 December 2006 delegating budgetary authority to the Crime Commission. The efforts of UNODC to introduce result-based management, project cycle management and greater coordination and coherence were also noted with appreciation. With regard to the strategy, one speaker stressed the need to focus on results and for greater transparency in the use of general-purpose funds.

5. In the view of a number of representatives, the strategy for the period 2008-2011 would improve transparency, efficiency and management. The development by UNODC of an implementation plan for the strategy and the related performance indicators was advocated.

6. Several representatives expressed concern over the question of resources, noting that the majority of them were extrabudgetary. They also remained concerned about the declining general-purpose fund balance. The high level of earmarked funding did not give UNODC the flexibility to set priorities. More general-purpose funding was needed to enable UNODC to improve the planning and implementation of activities in accordance with its mandate. In the view of one representative, the budget of UNODC was disproportionately supply-driven, and that undermined effective multilateralism.

7. In order to improve the ratio between earmarked and non-earmarked funds, it was indispensable for UNODC to provide donors with clear and transparent information on the use of general-purpose funds and the results attained. Improvements made by UNODC in increasing transparency in the use of general-purpose funds, cost efficiency and savings were acknowledged. One speaker called for greater efficiency and for greater coordination with other entities in the United

Nations system. One speaker asked for further improvements in the transparency of the budgetary information, including an annual financial statement and plan. He also asked that the budget for the biennium 2008-2009 be accompanied by a compendium of projects categorized in accordance with the result areas agreed in the strategy for the period 2008-2011. Another speaker asked for clarification on the uneven application of the 13 per cent rule for programme support costs and on the use of those funds.

8. Several speakers supported the efforts of UNODC to broaden its donor base, especially for general-purpose funding, and to ensure adequate, predictable and stable funding for its activities. One speaker expressed concern about the use of the phrase “subject to extrabudgetary resources” and the impact of a zero-growth regular budget on the work of UNODC.

9. Another speaker called attention to the need to provide technical assistance in the language of the beneficiary country, if possible, and, in particular, to ensure that all capacity-building materials were made available in all the official languages of the United Nations. Speakers commended the Terrorism Prevention Branch for presenting information on the UNODC website in the working languages of the Secretariat.

10. One speaker, referring to the use of language in draft resolutions that limited their implementation to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, noted his Government’s opposition to the utilization of such language. He noted that such a provision went beyond the mandate of the Commission and violated several General Assembly resolutions that recognized exclusive budgetary authority to the Fifth Committee. The use of that language was intended to prevent an expansion of the regular budget and, in particular, to impede the use of the Contingency Fund. Another speaker noted that he was unable to understand the reservations expressed about the utilization of such language.

11. One speaker expressed support for the continuing efforts of UNODC to integrate responses to drugs and crime and strongly encouraged the Office to continue initiatives such as strategic planning, integrity, result-based budgeting, project cycle management, knowledge management, evaluation and financial management. In recognition and support of that effort, the Government of Australia had decided to increase its contribution to the general-purpose fund. In addition to providing core funding, the Government of Australia had contributed to specific drug- and crime-related activities in Asia and the Pacific. In that respect, the speaker noted that projected funding for Asia and the Pacific in the consolidated budget for the biennium 2008-2009 was less than that for other regions and urged other donors to provide greater support for UNODC initiatives in that region.

12. One speaker suggested a number of ways of strengthening the effectiveness of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as a governing body of UNODC. In particular, he stressed the need for greater expertise and a balance between specific crime and social prevention issues addressed by the Commission. He also referred to the need for a balance between the diplomatic and substantive aspects of the work of the Commission. He expressed concern that the expert component of the composition and the work of the Commission had been eroded. He stressed the need for more efficient management of the agenda and for the selection of a single thematic issue for each session of the Commission. A

suggestion was made that the theme for the upcoming Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should be discussed during the informal pre-session consultations to be held prior to the seventeenth session of the Commission.

13. Some representatives expressed concern about the delay in sharing the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Independent Evaluation Unit with the Commission. Two speakers gave preliminary comments on those reports and the related management responses. They encouraged UNODC to adopt a constructive approach to the pertinent recommendations contained in the reports and looked forward to an opportunity in the near future to further discuss the reports and hear how UNODC intended to implement their recommendations. One speaker welcomed the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services with respect to the consolidation and rationalization of planning documents, including those pertaining to the budget.

14. Responding to comments made by Member States, including those on the delay in sharing the reports with the Commission, the secretariat assured the Commission that special briefings on each of the two reports would be held for all Member States in the near future.