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## Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Item 5 (b) (iii) of the provisional agenda\*

### **Illicit drug traffic and supply: follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly: Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development**

#### **Thailand: draft resolution**

### **Promoting best practices and lessons learned in sustainable alternative livelihood development**

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Bearing in mind* the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961,<sup>1</sup> that Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol,<sup>2</sup> the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971<sup>3</sup> and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988,<sup>4</sup>

*Recalling* the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, in which Member States recognized that action against the world drug problem was a common and shared responsibility,<sup>5</sup>

*Recalling also* the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development, in which it is stated that alternative development is an important component of a balanced and comprehensive drug control strategy and is intended to promote lawful and sustainable socio-economic options for those communities and population groups

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\* E/CN.7/2008/1.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., vol. 976, No. 14152.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., vol. 1019, No. 14956.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., vol. 1582, No. 27627.

<sup>5</sup> General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex, para. 2.



that have resorted to illicit cultivation as their only viable means of obtaining a livelihood, contributing in an integrated way to the eradication of poverty,<sup>6</sup>

*Reaffirming* the United Nations Millennium Declaration,<sup>7</sup> in particular the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability,<sup>8</sup>

*Reaffirming also* its resolution 2003/37 of 22 July 2003 and Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 45/14,

*Welcoming* the report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2005, featuring the theme of alternative development and legitimate livelihoods, in which the Board concluded that the focus of alternative development needed to be broadened and that Governments, international organizations and the other parties concerned needed to ensure that not just communities growing illicit drug crops but all communities affected by the illicit drug economy were provided with legitimate livelihoods that were both viable and sustainable in the long term,<sup>9</sup>

*Convinced* that, in reviewing the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development, there is a genuine need for the international community to revise the way alternative development has been practised in the past and expand the concept, taking into account the multifaceted nature of sustainable alternative livelihood development, which stresses the need for a lasting and sustainable outcome based on a variety of socially and economically viable, market-oriented livelihood alternatives,

*Recognizing* the significant achievements and efforts of countries in South-East Asia in recent decades towards eliminating illicit cultivation of opium poppy, coca bush and cannabis, the commitment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to making South-East Asia free of illicit drugs by 2015 and the cooperation between member States of the Association and China within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs, and welcoming the report entitled *Opium Poppy Cultivation in South-East Asia*, published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in October 2007, in which the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime stated that the Golden Triangle was closing a dramatic period of opium poppy cultivation and that Thailand stood out as a role model for other States trying to overcome their drug problems,

*Recognizing also* the success of the long-term approach to solving the problem of opium poppy cultivation that has been applied for forty years in national and international programs in Thailand, which led the United Nations Development Programme in May 2006 to present the first Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award to King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, and that the approach places human needs and dignity at the forefront of development and the efforts to eliminate illicit crops,

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<sup>6</sup> General Assembly resolution S-20/4 E, para. 17.

<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 55/2.

<sup>8</sup> A/56/326, annex, and A/58/323, annex.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.XI.2), para. 48.

*Recognizing further* the particular role of the Mae Fah Luang Foundation of Thailand, through its Doi Tung development project, in contributing to the successful elimination of illicit opium poppy cultivation in Thailand and in promoting sustainable alternative livelihood development in other countries,

*Noting* that, in its resolution 2003/3 of 11 July 2003, entitled “Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system”, it recommended that all organizations of the United Nations development system consider lessons learned and their dissemination as a specific required component of their activities,

*Stressing* that one of the most crucial examples of best practices and lessons learned from Thailand is the Doi Tung development project, a holistic and integrated approach to solving problems relating to health, poverty and education in the context of sustainable rural development with a view to empowering local inhabitants to help themselves and be self-reliant by the end of the thirty-year project,

*Acknowledging* that harnessing local wisdom and building capacity, as well as using a professional, market-oriented approach and social entrepreneurship in promoting products of sustainable alternative livelihood development, are essential to enabling such products to move up the value chain and gain wider access to international markets,

*Taking note* of the Marrakech Declaration on South-South Cooperation, in which the participants at the High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 16 to 19 December 2003, recognized, inter alia, the value of trilateral cooperation as a useful arrangement and stated that such arrangements should be encouraged so that the expertise of developing countries, with the financial support of developed countries, could be used to assist other developing countries,<sup>10</sup>

*Recognizing* the social, political, economic and other challenges to reconstruction faced by countries emerging from conflict, in particular those affected by illicit cultivation of narcotic drug crops, and the urgent need for renewed technical assistance and financial support for sustainable alternative livelihood development programmes in those countries,

1. *Emphasizes* that problems related to poverty, health and education frequently constitute root causes of people becoming involved in the illicit cultivation of narcotic drug crops and other drug-related activities and that such problems must be tackled in a larger development context using a holistic and integrated approach;

2. *Agrees* on the relevance of sustainable alternative livelihood development in moving forward alternative development in a manner focusing on sustainability and uplifting people’s livelihood and recommends that sustainable alternative livelihood development be applied to all work related to alternative development being carried out by all bodies in the United Nations system;

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<sup>10</sup> A/58/683, annex, para. 11.

3. *Recognizes* the catalytic role played by developing countries with extensive expertise in sustainable alternative livelihood development and the importance of outreach activities aimed at promoting a set of best practices and lessons learned in that area and sharing those best practices and lessons learned with States affected by illicit crop cultivation, particularly those emerging from conflict;

4. *Urges* donor Governments, as well as multilateral, international and regional financial institutions, in conformity with the principle of shared responsibility and as a sign of their commitment to fighting illicit drugs in a comprehensive and balanced manner, to intensify efforts to enhance South-South cooperation and trilateral cooperation in sustainable alternative livelihood development by increasing their financial and material support and technical assistance and providing a flexible and sufficiently long-term commitment to States affected by illicit crop cultivation;

5. *Commends* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for its continued and progressive work towards sustainable alternative livelihood development, described in its report entitled *Alternative Development: a Global Thematic Evaluation*,<sup>11</sup> especially the lessons learned and the recommendations contained therein, and acknowledges the need to provide the Office with additional funding in that area;

6. *Calls upon* Member States, consistent with their national and international obligations, and relevant international organizations, to consider measures to enable products of sustainable alternative livelihood development to have easier access to international markets;

7. *Invites* Member States to review and adopt, as appropriate, the set of best practices and lessons learned in sustainable alternative livelihood development, annexed to the present resolution, which were developed by Thailand and other States that have successfully implemented sustainable alternative livelihood development programmes, in the context of the review of the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development;<sup>12</sup>

8. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to explore ways and means of devising long-term and flexible financial mechanisms to support South-South cooperation and trilateral cooperation schemes on sustainable alternative livelihood development, including the involvement of the private sector;

9. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a set of international guiding principles on sustainable alternative livelihood development, based on the sharing of best practices and lessons learned in different countries and regions, with a view to integrating such elements into the global assessment of the progress achieved in meeting the goals and targets set in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session;<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.XI.13.

<sup>12</sup> General Assembly resolution S-20/4 E.

<sup>13</sup> General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex.

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit the text of the present resolution to multilateral, international and regional financial institutions and to all Governments for consideration and implementation;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

## Annex

### **Best practices and lessons learned in sustainable alternative livelihood development**

1. First and foremost, sustainable alternative livelihood development is people-centred. The Doi Tung development project in Thailand served as the model for the present set of best practices and lessons learned. The outlook, design and implementation were developed taking into account a fundamental question: how will people benefit from this project? That became the key performance indicator for the project.

2. The main objective of sustainable alternative livelihood development is to transform poor and vulnerable communities, especially in rural areas, from social and economic dependency or sub-sufficiency to full socio-economic sufficiency, in a participatory manner and at a pace appropriate to each stage, to allow the changes to be accepted and introduced by the communities. Keeping in mind the goal of sustainability, development practitioners should see their role as facilitators of progress and should plan their exit strategy to enable the communities to continue the activities without external intervention.

3. Sustainability in this context means that the communities have sufficient economic capacity in their factors of production and marketing and are able to maintain equitable social and cultural integrity and live in harmony with their natural environment (coexist with nature). With this definition in mind, sufficient health care must be made available because sick people cannot be economically productive. Ideally, an income-generating mechanism should be employed that allows people and a healthy natural environment to benefit greatly from one another. Continuous education will ensure that future generations will be able to pursue legitimate livelihoods, cope with the pressures of globalization and create for themselves opportunities for growth.

4. When applying sustainable alternative livelihood development in the context of drug control, the eradication of illicit crops should not be the immediate goal. Instead, the progressive introduction of viable alternative livelihoods in the broader context of rural development is needed to tackle the root cause of illicit crop cultivation – poverty – without severely curtailing the only available means of survival of the people involved.

5. Activities that provide people with alternative cash income and/or produce immediate health or social benefits within the first few months or days (so-called “quick hits”) are vital to building trust and enabling an immediate transition from illegitimate to legitimate sources of income, which can begin to transform the

economic prospects of a community. Successful “quick hits” build confidence and strengthen cooperation among stakeholders at all levels, from people at the grass-roots level and local authorities to leaders at the national level.

6. Medium-term and long-term activities are introduced simultaneously in order to ensure that the economic and social benefits are long-lasting and that the areas concerned remain free of illicit drug cultivation for a long time. Development activities must be based on continuity: each activity should lead to another, build on the success of previous initiatives and, over time, increase the hope and capabilities of the persons involved.

7. It is necessary to achieve a balance between a bottom-up and a top-down approach. Strong and committed leadership is required to ensure that development policies and activities are based on a true understanding of the needs and concerns of the target communities at the grass-roots level. Clear and constant communication is critical, especially at the beginning, for knowledge and experiences to be transferred not only from development practitioners but also to them.

8. Viable livelihoods should be available to all members of the community: the young and the elderly; the fit and the infirm; and men and women alike. Having a variety of income-generating activities may serve as a safeguard against weakened interests in an individual product or activity. Livelihood diversification is in fact a major success factor in sustainable alternative livelihood development (single-crop solutions are rarely sustainable).

9. Combining local wisdom and available resources with a market-driven product development approach and effective management will lead to the creation of a viable value chain at the local level. Revenue from value-added goods locally manufactured by such an enterprise must contribute to the social benefits of the target communities and society in general. Such social entrepreneurship – the practice of using business profits to generate social goods – can lead to real socio-economic sustainability.

10. To ensure that development objectives are realized as expected, mechanisms must be in place to allow frequent assessments and necessary adjustments, starting with comprehensive census baseline data captured through both qualitative and quantitative development indicators. Project monitoring and evaluation hold development practitioners accountable for their action, and that is crucial, as people’s lives depend on the performance of those practitioners and imprudent and uncaring development often has adverse effects.

11. Ultimately, the key to sustainable alternative livelihood development is community ownership, where capacities and economic activities have been developed to such an extent that the communities can become owners in their ventures rather than only serving as contract farmers or employees. Community ownership means not only physical ownership of the enterprises but also emotional ownership, on the part of the community, of its own development and future, from the very start.

12. Since the issue of sustainability envisages the long-term commitment of all parties involved, it also calls for longer-term and sufficiently flexible funding from a variety of sources, including Governments, international organizations, multilateral financial institutions and other donors and development partners.