



General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

38th plenary meeting

Thursday, 5 November 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 105

International drug control

Plenary meeting to consider the results of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (A/64/92)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): This morning, the General Assembly will consider the results of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, under agenda item 105, in accordance with the decision taken at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, and with its resolution 63/197 of 18 December 2008.

Before we begin, I should like to make a few comments on the issue before the Assembly for its consideration today.

The issue of narcotics and drug control is an important and critical one, since it affects the entire planet. The international community must unite its efforts in a serious and collective manner in order to stamp out this dangerous scourge, which destroys human beings and crushes individuals. The war against drugs is not merely an issue of security; it also has political and health dimensions. The drug trade has become a means of spreading disease and rebellions, because this illegal and illegitimate trade produces revenue that can be used to traffic in other illicit goods,

such as weapons, which supply rebellions and terrorist activities in many areas of the world. Africa's Sahara desert is a good example of this phenomenon, since this trade is now being used as a tool to aid rebels to rise up against legitimate Governments in some African States in the centre of the continent.

Moreover, the drug trade has a dangerous political dimension. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, a rebellion, fuelled by the drug trade, led to the assassination of the former President of the republic and some army commanders who refused to join forces with the rebels. As a result, the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, is required to take collective measures to eliminate, or at least reduce, the dangers caused by this illegitimate trade.

Mr. Bennwik (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The EU welcomes the adoption of the Political Declaration and its Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem (see A/64/92), as adopted during the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and calls upon States to take the necessary measures to fully implement the actions it outlines, with the aim of attaining their goals and targets in a timely manner.

The European Union recognizes the important role of the United Nations in coordinating the development of effective strategies and measures for reducing the deleterious effect of illicit drugs on the

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health, social well-being and safety of people across the world. In this regard, the EU also recognizes the work performed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The international drug-control treaties are the result of the efforts of the international community to combat the world drug problem and to ensure that narcotic drugs are available for medical and scientific purposes while curtailing their diversion to the illicit market and preventing drug abuse. Additionally, the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances provides comprehensive measures against drug trafficking, money-laundering and the diversion of precursor chemicals. Today these Conventions remain the framework for action in international drug control. We must ensure that all relevant drugs are controlled under the Conventions.

The overall goals and targets of United Nations drug policy, drawn up in line with the international drug control treaties and in conjunction with human rights instruments, the rule of law and principles of proportionality, must be maintained. We stand firmly by the international treaties and other legal instruments of drug control, as these will continue to represent the foundation for international cooperation in countering the world drug problem. The goals and targets of United Nations drug policy are also a fundamental part of the new EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009 to 2012.

Considerable support for strengthening a balanced, integrated, multidisciplinary and mutually reinforcing approach to supply-and-demand reduction strategies emerged in the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its high-level segment. The EU welcomes this approach. The new Political Declaration adopted during the high-level segment has adjusted to the current situation the careful assessment adopted by the 1988 special session of the Assembly.

The European Union shares the global concern about the increasing impact that drug abuse and trafficking have on societies' political and socio-economic stability and their implications for human security at large. The EU is committed to protecting and improving the well-being of society and individuals, protecting public health, providing income alternatives, offering a high level of security for the general public, and taking a balanced, integrated

approach to the drug problem, both within the EU, as well as in our cooperation with other countries and regions.

Full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is an essential element in the global response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It reduces vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and prevents the stigmatization of and related discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Appropriate solutions are necessary to overcome the legal, regulatory and other barriers that inhibit access to effective HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, including medicines, commodities and services. We welcome the promotion of all human rights and freedoms for all people living with HIV/AIDS and members of vulnerable groups, as well as the facilitation of their participation in all aspects of HIV/AIDS response.

The EU calls on relevant organizations of the United Nations, especially the UNODC, to continue, through a comprehensive and integrated approach, to help States with technical expertise and assistance in addressing the drug issue in a balanced, integrated and comprehensive manner. In order to strengthen the struggle against the drug problem, initiatives should be taken to build institutional capacity to improve the skills and experience of national experts in all areas of drug control, including the health sector, the provision of legal livelihoods and alternative development, law enforcement and the judicial system.

The European Union attaches great importance to data collection and monitoring. Drug policies should be based on the best available scientific evidence as well as on a regular assessment of the nature and magnitude of the drug problem, where increased research into many aspects is needed. This is an important task for the United Nations and the EU, as well as for all Member States. The EU welcomes resolution 52/12 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which invites Member States to strengthen their efforts to review and improve data collection tools in order to reach an objective, scientific, and balanced assessment of progress made and obstacles encountered in implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted during the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Currently, many countries lack the most basic knowledge about their own drug situation. We must

bridge the widening gap between countries with well-developed information systems and research capacities and those which lack capabilities in these areas. This can be done only by investing in building national capacity within countries. The EU looks forward to the report of UNODC's Executive Director, at the next session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, on how to build the capacity of Member States to collect and report information.

The EU welcomes measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem. We are committed to tackling the drug problem on the international level in partnership with the United Nations. The EU would like to emphasize the need for close cooperation between UNODC and all relevant United Nations organizations in the area of demand and supply reduction, while respecting each organization's individual role and mandate. Such an integrated approach is necessary for mainstream policies and guarantees more effective use of resources in line with the coherence of the system as a whole, which is also referred to as delivering as one.

The drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all humankind. It undermines sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions, including efforts to eradicate poverty, and threatens national security and the rule of law.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam and Thailand.

Over a decade ago, countries from around the world gathered at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and pledged to tackle collectively the global drug problem. Today, despite tremendous efforts, the drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of our peoples, in particular that of our youths. It also undermines the sustainable development, economic progress and political stability of many countries. Narcotic drugs are a menace to humankind and a common problem for all countries, rich and poor alike. We, the countries of ASEAN, are no exception, as we have for decades faced the various problems related to

narcotic drugs. In that connection, I would like to share ASEAN's views on some key points related to this important issue before us.

First, ASEAN welcomes the convening of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which was held in Vienna in March 2009. ASEAN believes that that high-level meeting provided a good opportunity for the international community to take stock of progress and shortcomings in implementing the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, in 1998. We also believe that it was an opportunity to renew our political commitment to the global fight against drugs and to set clear policy directives for the years ahead.

ASEAN is committed to implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, which were adopted by the high-level meeting. We believe that both documents embody the collective will of the international community and should serve as a guide for our actions in the future.

Secondly, ASEAN believes that a holistic and integrated approach is vital in order to effectively tackle multifaceted problems related to narcotic drugs. Demand reduction, supply reduction and international cooperation are mutually reinforcing, and should be pursued concurrently. Law enforcement measures must be complemented by effective national criminal justice, modern scientific equipment and technology, close judicial cooperation among countries and social, cultural and economic measures to tackle the world drug problem.

In the meantime, ASEAN wishes to stress the importance of addressing the root causes of the drug problem. From our first-hand experience in South-East Asia, we feel that the drug problem is closely connected to issues of poverty and development. As in other regions, opium poppy and cannabis cultivators in South-East Asia are usually poor farmers in rural areas who depend on the sale of those illicit narcotic crops for their livelihoods. Therefore, it is important to provide them not only with substitute or alternative crops that can serve as other sources of income, but also development projects that bring about concrete improvement in their livelihoods, such as health-care

centres, schools, clean drinking water, roads and electricity.

It is equally important to stress that, to be durable and effective, such development projects should be based on the actual needs and ownership of the communities concerned. Sustained assistance from the authorities in terms of know-how, techniques, funding and technology transfer is important throughout the various stages of crop selection, farming, harvesting and marketing. Regional and international partnership to strengthen the capacity of the countries concerned to carry out such projects is also essential.

Thirdly, ASEAN welcomes the indication in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *2009 World Drug Report* that there were some encouraging reductions in the production of cocaine and heroin worldwide in 2008. We also welcome reports suggesting that the use of opium in traditional opium-using countries in South-East Asia may be declining. However, ASEAN is gravely concerned about the worsening global problem of amphetamine-type stimulants. We are concerned that such stimulants are now being made in a growing number of different countries and through the use of various manufacturing techniques. The production of such stimulants and the market for them are projected to continue to grow in East and South-East Asia at alarming speed, with disturbing implications for countries of the region.

We are also concerned that the international community has yet to fully understand the market for such illicit synthetic drugs and its characteristics, owing to the absence of a systematic global mechanism for monitoring the illicit manufacture, prevalence patterns and abuse of and trafficking in ATS. ASEAN therefore strongly believes that the international community should focus more on tackling that fast-growing global drug problem.

We welcome the launch of the UNODC global synthetics monitoring programme for analysis, reporting and trends, which aims to enhance the capacity of countries to generate, manage, analyse, report and use information on synthetic drugs to design effective policy and programme interventions. We also welcome the initiatives of the International Narcotics Control Board to control substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Fourthly, ASEAN is committed to strengthening regional cooperation so as to complement efforts at the international and national levels to counter the drug problem. Since 2000, ASEAN has pledged to work towards achieving a drug-free ASEAN by 2015. That goal was reaffirmed and further elaborated in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, both of which were adopted at the fourteenth ASEAN Summit, held in Thailand earlier this year. In those Blueprints, the ASEAN countries have pledged to carry out a broad range of actions to counter drug trafficking in South-East Asia. For example, ASEAN countries will further strengthen measures to prevent the illicit production of drugs, regulate import and export of controlled chemical precursors and enhance cross-border law enforcement through information-sharing and capacity-building. We will assist each other in enhancing scientific laboratory capacity in precursor identification and analysis for enforcement operations and intelligence, exchanging knowledge concerning the profiles of drug syndicate groups and strengthening the criminal justice system capacities of individual countries.

ASEAN countries will strengthen preventive measures through civic awareness and social response and increase access to treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services in order to ensure full reintegration into society. Partnerships among the public and private sectors and civil society organizations are also currently being enhanced.

Building on this political commitment at the highest level, ASEAN senior officials on drug matters recently met in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and agreed to an action-oriented ASEAN Work Plan on Combating Illicit Drug Production, Trafficking and Use for 2009-2015. The Work Plan will guide ASEAN in substantially reducing illicit crop cultivation, drug production and trafficking, illicit drug use and drug-related crime. The meeting also agreed to set up a mechanism to monitor implementation of the Work Plan.

Beyond South-East Asia, ASEAN has cooperated closely with China and UNODC through the ASEAN-China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs, established in 2000 to advance regional cooperation to control and combat drugs. ASEAN has also worked with other partners to tackle narcotic drugs as an integral part of the cooperative

efforts to combat transnational organized crime and non-traditional security threats.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm ASEAN's strong commitment to realizing a society free of drug abuse in order to ensure that all people are able to live in good health, dignity and peace, with security and prosperity, as envisaged in the Political Declaration adopted by the high-level meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna earlier this year. Towards this end, ASEAN looks forward to strengthening cooperation with UNODC and our other partners.

Ms. Dunlop (Brazil): Brazil thanks the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for its report on the outcome of the high-level segment of its fifty-second session (A/64/92). We also appreciate the continued efforts of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other related bodies of the Organization to tackle the global drug problem.

At the General Assembly's special session on drugs in 1998, we committed ourselves to a drug-free world. Our delegations agreed on a Political Declaration (resolution S-20/2, annex), which was a valuable tool for advancing national efforts, strengthening international cooperation and addressing our shared responsibility to deal with this issue.

In March in Vienna, the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted a new Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Brazil welcomes the adoption of those documents. They establish future priorities and suggest urgent actions based on effective and increased international cooperation. Moreover, they take an integrated and balanced approach vis-à-vis supply and demand reduction strategies.

I seize this opportunity to reaffirm Brazil's commitment to the struggle against the drug problem. Important progress has been achieved in Brazil during the past few years. Since 2003, under President Lula's leadership, we have updated the principles of our policy, taking into consideration the most recent scientific studies on the matter and our social, political and economic environment. As the result of an open consultation process, Brazil enacted its National Drug Policy in 2005. Similar to the new Political Declaration adopted last March in Vienna, our drug policy takes a

broad and balanced approach to the drug problem by integrating public health and human rights aspects based on our 1988 Constitution.

The new Brazilian drug law enacted in 2006 also followed the same path. It established the National System of Public Policies on Drugs. In an innovative way, it defined a legal difference between drug traffickers and drug users and included the financing of drug trafficking as a serious crime, with a view to depriving criminal organizations of funds. We are encouraged by the fact that through a combination of efforts aimed at supply and demand reduction, the traditional polarization of the prohibition and legalization models could be overcome.

In Brazil, intensified border monitoring, substance control, eradication of illicit crops and the fight against money-laundering and drug trafficking represent only some of our efforts towards drug supply reduction. All of these efforts, however, have been matched with consistent demand reduction actions. With the support of the scientific community, we are planning initiatives based on the study and diagnosis of drug consumption patterns.

I would also like to congratulate UNODC on its 2009 World Drug Report. According to its surveys, illicit drugs continue to pose a health danger in many countries around the world. In this context, we firmly support the new Political Declaration with its pledge to establish greater controls on criminal activities, while at the same time promoting the right of drug users to better health.

International cooperation in drug control began one hundred years ago when the International Opium Commission met in Shanghai in 1909. Attended by 13 countries, the Shanghai conference led to the signing of the first international convention to attempt the control of a narcotic in 1912. Since then, Brazil has firmly supported all efforts to address this issue in the international arena.

Despite all of the progress achieved since Shanghai, we must, in order to solve the world drug problem, redouble our national efforts and recommit to increased cooperation at regional and international levels. Brazil will continue to do its part, working with all Member States and the United Nations system in order to further our common goals. On a bilateral basis, we will also continue to strengthen our dialogue and cooperation with many countries, in particular with our

South American neighbours, to address this important issue.

Mr. Gutiérrez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem (see A/64/92), adopted at the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and acknowledges that those documents are a valuable source to guide the work of our countries in the fight against drugs. Peru shares the concern of the international community about the dangers posed by this world problem and, therefore, underscores the spirit of trust and cooperation that encouraged the Member States to adopt the Political Declaration in order to decide future priorities and urgent measures to fight the drug scourge.

One element of the world drug problem that demands pressing attention is drug trafficking. In addition to the danger that that activity poses per se, its links with violence, organized crime and even, in some countries, terrorist activities should be highlighted. It is also associated with other criminal activities, such as money-laundering, arms trafficking, trafficking in persons and corruption. That range of threats causes incalculable losses of human life and substantial material damage and requires both preventive action and penalties in order to safeguard the security and the human rights of our populations.

As a side effect, but one of great impact, drug trafficking has an adverse effect on the environment. The illicit production of coca leaves is destructive in countries in which those crops exist, as is the case in Peru, where three hectares of forests are razed in order to cultivate a hectare of coca. Despite the efforts of our national authorities to address that situation, the Amazon forest is suffering irreparable damage through the felling and burning of forests with a view to increasing the illegal cultivation of coca, thereby eroding the soil. Those actions are believed to have caused the deforestation of 2.5 million hectares of Amazonian forest, with related consequences for global warming.

Various areas must be tackled in order to fight drug trafficking. Therefore, coordinating actions that are adopted is key to achieving positive results. Thus, we believe it important to jointly implement, through legislative measures, penalties for offenders and the

interdiction and eradication of illicit crops, other steps, such as prevention and the implementation of alternative development programmes and projects.

Among the actions taken by Peru, in particular for the benefit of the affected populations, we wish to highlight as a development tool the alternative development programmes and projects, especially those geared to agriculture. Specifically, my delegation thanks the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the cooperation extended to Peru in the field of alternative development. The projects arising from that cooperation benefit 23,000 families of farmers and cooperate with local communities in order to diversify agricultural production, aimed at both the domestic and the international markets. The virtues of such programmes and projects have been acknowledged in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and in various resolutions of the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations system, where, moreover, States with experience in that area have been encouraged to share their best practices and lessons learned with those States affected by illicit crops.

The implementation of all those steps requires a great financial effort on the part of the States suffering from the drug trafficking problem and whose resources for the most part are not available in the necessary quantities. In the particular case of Peru, while we allocate over \$600 million a year to fight that illicit activity, that figure is tiny in the face of the challenge that we face, which comprises a criminal network with international links producing and trafficking drugs worth nearly \$22 billion. That is why sustained international cooperation is vitally important.

In that regard, we are pleased that the Political Declaration and Plan of Action refer to the principle of a common and shared responsibility and the need for effective and increased international cooperation, which demands an integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach in order to reduce both the supply and the demand of drugs, and whose strategies must be mutually reinforcing. To meet those considerations, the agendas of the developed countries, especially consumer countries, must give pride of place to cooperation on fighting drug trafficking, in particular as the need to intensify and strengthen joint efforts, including through enhanced and better coordination of

technical and financial assistance, has specifically been stressed in the Political Declaration itself.

For the purposes of implementing the Political Declaration and its Plan of Action with a view to truly integrated international cooperation, it is necessary to be fully aware of the current situation in that field. Only by ascertaining the destination of cooperation flows, in particular financial cooperation flows, will we have an idea of how States are tackling the drug problem globally and ascertain if it is necessary to refocus cooperation towards those countries that need it most. As is noted in the Political Declaration, States are committed to enhancing cooperation, taking into account those situations in which countries are substantially affected by illicit crops for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and by the illicit trade in drugs and precursors, in order to combat the global problem of drugs and its repercussions for political stability, democratic institutions, security, the rule of law and sustainable development, including efforts to eradicate poverty.

Therefore, my country, Peru, attaches great importance to the need for a report that includes statistics and relevant information on the resources that international cooperation devotes to the fight against illicit drug trafficking, while also identifying key programmes to strengthen cooperation with the countries most affected by illicit drug production.

In that regard, the draft resolution on international cooperation against the world drug problem (A/C.3/64/L.15), which will be submitted for adoption by the General Assembly through the Third Committee, acknowledges the need for that information and urges Member States to support the dialogue on that topic through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. We believe that to be a first step in the right direction in order to have in the near future a comprehensive report on the issue.

We are sure that such a report will facilitate greater and better coordination of cooperating countries, international organizations and financial institutions with the rest of the countries concerned, whether manufacturing, consumer or transit countries, and thus, we believe, help in future to improve the way in which we tackle the problem of illicit drug trafficking at the global level.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): From the perspective of Saint Vincent and

the Grenadines, it is impossible to overstate the importance of the issues of narcotic drugs and our international cooperation in addressing the problem. We therefore welcome this opportunity to address those topics and the numerous reports and studies that have been generated, particularly the outcome of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (A/64/92) and documents A/64/120 and A/64/123. In addition to those documents, we also recommend for consideration by the Assembly the World Drug Report and 2009 Annual Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and also note the continuing relevance of UNODC's 2007 report entitled "Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean", as well as its 2008 report entitled, "The Threat of Narco-trafficking in the Americas".

We continue to align ourselves with the statements made by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) before the Third Committee on 8 October.

Until very recently, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was an economy that relied primarily on banana exports to the United Kingdom. However, in the face of challenges made to the World Trade Organization by other large banana interests and the United States — which does not grow a single bunch of bananas — our preferential access to the United Kingdom market is fast disappearing.

Today, we are producing less than half the bananas we grew only 10 years ago. In 1992, Windward Island banana exports to the United Kingdom market represented 274,000 tonnes, or a 45 per cent share of that market. Today, we ship less than a quarter of that amount to the United Kingdom, and our market share is in the single digits.

The resulting unemployment, rural poverty and sudden social dislocation have presented a number of difficult challenges to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. One of these is an increase in marijuana cultivation in the remote hills of our country's interior, where producers destroy ancient old-growth rain forests to cultivate hundreds of acres of cannabis herb. A single recent raid by regional security forces uncovered over 700,000 marijuana plants and 3 million seedlings in one area. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

has, unfortunately, now become one of the Caribbean's major marijuana producers.

However, those responsible for this rise in production are not noble farmers eking out a living in hostile conditions. Marijuana production has rapidly morphed into an elaborate criminal enterprise, orchestrated by heavily armed drug barons and gangs, often from other countries. Law enforcement officers in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are seizing ever-increasing numbers of ever-more sophisticated firearms, which are directly linked to the narcotics trade and trafficking in our country and region.

UNODC's report "Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean", states that

"Murder rates in the Caribbean — at 30 per 100,000 population annually — are higher than for any other region of the world and have risen in recent years for many of the region's countries."

According to its report, "The Threat of Narcotrafficking in the Americas", the UNODC posits that

"The Caribbean is such a diverse region that it is difficult to explain the widespread recent escalation in violence in terms other than those relating to the drug trade."

That drug trade is the most pressing and immediate threat to the security of our region. UNODC reports that about 20 per cent of the cocaine destined for North America currently travels through the Caribbean, with increasing amounts of synthetic drugs also passing through our region en route to markets in developed countries. The southern Caribbean is increasingly being utilized as a trans-shipment point, and is particularly favoured by drug producers from certain South American States. The UNODC also suggests that the Caribbean will continue to play an important — and possibly increasing — role in future drug transit.

According to the UNODC's crime, violence and development report for the Caribbean,

"The Caribbean is especially vulnerable to crime for several reasons. It suffers from the disadvantage of being situated between the world's source of cocaine (the Andean region of South America) and its primary consumer

markets (the United States and Europe) ... As small islands, Caribbean countries and territories have large coastlines and territorial waters to control relative to their ability to fund law enforcement coverage. Small criminal justice systems are easily overwhelmed in terms of police, courts and prisons. Police must deal with seasonal tourist inflows, and, in some countries, the number of annual visitors actually exceeds the size of the local population. The Caribbean has some of the highest prisoner-to-population ratios in the world, and overcrowding interferes with the rehabilitation process."

That description is particularly apt for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The 32 islands of our archipelago — with their rugged coastlines and vast seascape — are patrolled by a mere handful of coastguard vessels. Our justice system is crowded with drug-related crimes and criminals. Furthermore, one cannot overstate the ease with which a single, relatively minor, drug baron can threaten the very foundations of our region's small societies. In countries like ours, with only a few hundred largely unarmed, law enforcement officers, one heavily armed drug gang — no matter how insignificant in the global scheme — can seriously threaten to undermine the State's legitimate monopoly on coercive force.

The developmental repercussions of this drug trade and its associated crime are profound. UNODC has estimated, for example, that Haiti and Jamaica could double their annual economic income if they could bring their crime rates down to Costa Rica's level. This drug trade is therefore a very real threat to our regional growth and development.

We welcome the outcome of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, particularly its recognition of the multifaceted challenges faced by transit States and its call for increased technical and financial assistance to States most directly affected by the world drug problem. This is indeed a global problem and the human and financial costs of combating it cannot be borne by States like ours, which are essentially transit points for drugs on their way to North American and European markets.

The studies that have been written are voluminous and detailed. The onus now is on Governments — particularly in those States whose

demand fuels the drug trade — to demonstrate the necessary political will to cooperate fully against the drug problem. It is better for us to hold hands in cooperation than to point fingers, and the cost of ignoring this problem is far greater than the cost of confronting it head-on.

At the same time, the interconnectedness of the world drug problem to other global issues must be acknowledged and addressed. Surely, it is preferable for international trading regimes to carve out exceptions and export preferences for what are essentially *de minimus* producers of legitimate agricultural goods, than it is to force them to choose between unemployment and the production of illicit cash crops.

Mr. Puri (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The global economic and financial crisis has also added to the list of international maladies that were not created in the Caribbean, but that disproportionately affect our subregion. The list includes climate change, an iniquitous international trade regime, small arms trafficking and narcotic trans-shipment. Make no mistake: without active and aggressive assistance to small, vulnerable and poor countries like ours, the yawning social, political and economic cleavages caused by this global economic and financial crisis will only increase the attractiveness of illicit drugs and their disastrous global implications.

Furthermore, the link between narcotics and the trafficking of small arms is strong and irrefutable. We cannot afford continued dalliances by arms-producing countries that fail to comprehend the need for meaningful controls on the flow of small arms and light weapons. The time is long since past for an enforceable global accord on this matter.

Finally, our delegation takes this opportunity to again register the alarm and profound dismay of the entire Caribbean community at the closure of UNODC's Caribbean field office. We consider it nothing less than an abandonment of the Caribbean region.

In this year's UNODC Annual Report, Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa is quoted as saying, "States in the Caribbean, Central America and West Africa, as well as the border regions of Mexico, are caught in the crossfire between the world's biggest coca producers ... and the biggest consumers."

In the preface to UNODC's report on the threat of narco-trafficking in the Americas, the Executive Director states that "Drug-related crime and the violence that it fuels in ... parts of the Caribbean ... are a threat to public safety and an impediment to development."

Within this context, it is beyond baffling that UNODC can close its only office in the Caribbean, a region with the highest murder rate, with one fifth of the cocaine traffic to North America, with increasing transit of synthetic drugs, and with rising levels of addiction to certain narcotics. Indeed, when we read in the preface to the 2009 UNODC report that the Office is stepping up its engagement in Central America and the Caribbean to reduce the vulnerability of these regions to drugs and crime, CARICOM wonders how this "stepped up" engagement can take place in the face of a physical retreat from the region.

In that light, while we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation against the world drug problem, we want to express our clear view that, inasmuch as the Secretary-General's recommendation that Member States "support the reconfiguration of the network of field offices of UNODC" (A/64/120, para. 96) may be a euphemism for the closure of the Caribbean office, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines rejects that recommendation.

While we are fully aware of UNODC's budgetary constraints, it is inconceivable to us that our abandonment, or any other administrative expediency, could form part of the solution to UNODC's difficulties or the wider battle against the world drug problem. We in the Caribbean deserve and demand a meaningful, measurable and tangible engagement in our region, for which a physical presence is a necessary prerequisite.

The war on drugs cannot be fought on the cheap. International cooperation against the world drug problem must be tangible and meaningful. The very future of scores of small States, like ours, depends on it.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Mexico, it is an honour to address the General Assembly for the consideration of the report by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as contained in document A/64/92, which reflects the outcome of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

That report identifies the progress made in meeting the targets and objectives established in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. Thanks to the discussions held in each one of those bodies, it has been once again internationally reaffirmed that the global problem of drugs should be addressed in a comprehensive manner that includes the implementation of well-targeted strategies relating to each one of the different facets of the issue. Attention should also be paid to crime related to the illicit trafficking and production of drugs.

Our Governments' concerns vary according to which of the problem we are considering. However, all Governments here today are obliged to make a coordinated commitment to improved international cooperation to tackle the scourge that has left our societies ill.

We recall that in 1998 Mexico promoted the twentieth special session of the General Assembly in order to counter the problem of drugs. The goal was for the international community to recognize that the phenomenon merits an integrated and balanced fight guided by the principle of shared responsibility. With that resolve, Mexico has promoted important proposals on the regional level. Those initiatives include the multilateral evaluation mechanism of the Organization of American States and aim at increasing cooperation, dialogue and trust among countries in the hemisphere.

Just more than a decade after the special session of 1998, Mexico reaffirmed its commitment to the fight against drugs around the world by actively participating in the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. That was an important event at which the international community, guided by the principle of shared responsibility, renewed its commitment by adopting a Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

At that event, Mexico underscored that the trafficking in weapons and chemical precursors, the production of synthetic drugs, money-laundering, violence, extortion, kidnapping and the corruption of law enforcement agencies and judicial systems are the new face of the problem that should give rise to new forms of cooperation. The extraordinary ease with which weapons can be acquired and trafficked, which

adds to the economic power of the related criminal activity, is what makes criminal organizations so strong.

That is why Mexico wishes to underscore the recognition afforded in paragraph 27 of the Political Declaration to the growing violence arising from the activities of criminal organizations involved in illicit drug trafficking. In that context, my delegation reiterates its request for the urgent adoption of measures to prevent those organizations from attaining the resources necessary and, in particular, firearms and munitions, to pursue their criminal activity. Our commitment is full-fledged. That is why we call for a greater number of ratifications aiming towards the universality of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The relevance of the Political Declaration and its Plan of Action, agreed upon at the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, is grounded in the fact that both instruments identify new challenges and future priorities as well as goals and targets that allow us to undertake concrete national and international action.

Among future priorities, my delegation wishes to underscore those that, in the area of supply reduction, promote bilateral, subregional, regional and multilateral cooperation between judicial authorities and law enforcement bodies in order to fight the criminal organizations in their production and trafficking of drugs and related criminal activities.

Also among our future priorities is the implementation of those actions that will allow us to tackle the new trends in trafficking and, in particular, those tied to new technologies, new routes and new methods used by the drug traffickers. All of the aforementioned is aimed at reducing the illicit supply of drugs.

Another crucial priority has to do with the control of chemical precursors and amphetamine-type stimulants. In the case of those substances, one of the challenges that must be met is that of adopting those measures that help to promote control of illicit synthetic narcotics. My delegation respectfully calls upon Member States to join efforts to identify new trends through a timely exchange of information.

Money-laundering of drug proceeds and other serious crimes have increased. That is a global problem that also threatens the security and stability of institutions and financial systems. Without a doubt, that constitutes another great challenge that compels us to urgently promote domestic legislation or a strengthening of existing legislation in order to penalize money-laundering linked to drug trafficking, the diversion of chemical precursors and other serious transnational crimes.

The Government of Mexico is firmly committed to strengthening international cooperation as a tool to combat the global drug problem. That is why Mexico presents each year a draft omnibus resolution on drugs, negotiations for which have just concluded favourably. The draft resolution devotes particular importance to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Further, the draft resolution gives the Declaration and Plan of Action their appropriate political weight by virtue of placing them before the General Assembly for consideration.

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the dedication and effort that political and technical experts from all delegations, both in Vienna and here at Headquarters, have brought to difficult and fruitful debates at various times, both in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and in the Third Committee, working to fulfil commitments that we acknowledge and endorse.

The outcome that we see today through the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, as well as the draft omnibus resolution on international cooperation in the fight against drugs that the General Assembly will adopt in the next few days, reflect the international consensus on the subject and the willingness of Governments to incorporate in an integrated way all the aspects necessary to combat the scourge of drugs.

Mexico firmly believes that in order to effectively implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, countries will need to bolster international cooperation, coordinating regional and international organizations working in the field with international financial institutions and civil society organizations.

Governments should not and cannot be alone in this task. Their actions should be responsibly supported by various actors, drawn from non-governmental

organizations and the private sector in such a way that the global fight against drugs will have favourable repercussions in political stability, democratic institutions, security, the rule of law, sustainable development and health in our societies.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this General Assembly meeting on the outcome of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held last March in Vienna. During that important event, our ministers reviewed the progress made in the decade since the General Assembly adopted, at its twentieth special session, its Political Declaration and Action Plan on international cooperation towards an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem. Important decisions were taken about future priorities and urgent measures to combat the world drug problem beyond 2009.

With the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the high-level segment, the world reiterated the commitment made in 1998 to promote the effective implementation of the guiding principles in the fight against drugs. In that spirit, there was a reaffirmation that each one of the links that make up the chain of the world drug problem must be faced in the framework of common, shared responsibility, with an integrated and balanced approach that fully conforms to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter and that strengthens international cooperation.

At the same time, there was a recognition that despite efforts and progress made by States, international organizations and civil society, the world drug problem continues to threaten health, security and the well-being of humanity. It was also observed that the world drug problem in all its aspects undermines sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions. Moreover, it is a threat to national security and the rule of law, and diminishes the efficacy of efforts to eradicate poverty.

For more than three decades, Colombia has fought against this scourge in an ongoing and fully dedicated way. For that reason my country places particular importance on the renewal of the international community's commitments. Experience has shown that only when it is attacked from all fronts can the criminal system behind the drug trade be destabilized. In this regard, the efficacy of the

prodigious efforts applied at the national level will be reduced if there is not full commitment and cooperation on the part of all States.

With the goal of bringing security, well-being and social cohesion to all citizens, the Colombian State is moving forward with a comprehensive approach and strategy based on reduction of supply and demand as well as the fight against all crimes related to the drug trade. Colombian institutions have worked diligently to fight this global threat in a coherent way and have achieved resounding successes that are evident in advances in public health, well-being and security for our entire society.

Today we can say that drug production and trafficking are losing ground in Colombia. National efforts have brought the country close to the Plan Colombia goals set eight years ago to reduce the production of cocaine by 50 per cent. As mentioned in the *2009 World Drug Report*, Colombia's efforts in aerial fumigation, manual eradication and chemical controls, as well as its alternative development projects, have led to a reduction in total world cocaine production.

Colombia would like to hold up as a major sign of progress, as reflected in the Political Declaration, the recognition of alternative development as a useful instrument in tackling the problem of illicit crops from the development perspective. In that spirit, we must underline the need to strengthen international cooperation to finance, formulate and implement sustainable alternative development programmes in countries affected by illicit crops used in drug production.

Increased support on the part of the international community for strategies to reduce illegal crops must be a priority, not only in terms of technical and financial resources, but also politically. Preferential access to world markets for goods produced through such initiatives is an essential factor for their sustainability.

During the high-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Colombia reiterated that the world drug problem is an ever more global and transnational phenomenon that threatens the entire international community. Colombia emphasized the importance of tackling the many elements of the chain comprising the world drug problem, including consumption, crop cultivation, the production of natural and synthetic

psychotropic drugs, trafficking and distribution, the diversion of chemical precursors and money-laundering.

At the same time, Colombia warned of the growing urgent need to increase national and international strategies to respond to the grave challenges presented by the ever closer ties between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, in particular trafficking in persons, the illicit arms trade, cybercrime, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

The constant evolution and adaptability of the means and resources used by organized crime demand that we continually update our strategies. The international community must focus on an integrated and multidisciplinary approach that will allow us to tackle these new challenges. In this context, it is essential that we improve sources of information on the international level, so that Member States can better understand the trends and consequences of the problem. Joint planning mechanisms must be created to deal with specific routes and markets used for trafficking and consuming drugs. We need better oversight systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes and policies for reducing supply and demand. And control and oversight programmes need to be updated in order to tackle the problems that come with illicit synthetic drugs.

In this regard, international cooperation must be aimed at meeting the commitments and obligations entered into by States in the fight against the world drug problem and related crimes. This can be achieved with sufficient coordination of plans and actions between countries, financial and technical cooperation, and the timely exchange of operational and judicial information. An integrated strategy against the global drug problem can be sustainable and effective only if the international community as a whole confronts all the links in the chain with equal resolve and unity. We must all work together in an integrated way to produce results and make progress in eliminating this scourge, including all the criminal activities that serve to sustain it.

Colombia, for its part, continues to maintain its unflagging commitment to working on bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, through effective coordination and cooperation measures that address the

transnational, dynamic and multidimensional nature of this global threat.

Ms. Ross (United States of America): My delegation would like to express our appreciation, through you, Mr. President, to Namibia, for its stewardship of the review of the General Assembly's special session commitments and the high-level proceedings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which were open to all Member States. We also express our gratitude to Mexico for its efforts in chairing the draft resolution on this topic in the Third Committee (A/C.3/64/L.15/Rev.1) This General Assembly plenary meeting on drugs is the culmination of the ten-year review of the twentieth special session commitments (see resolutions S-20/2, S-20/3 and S-20/4) to further the implementation of the three United Nations drug-control conventions. Those conventions, to which more than 95 per cent of Member States are parties, continue to provide the framework for our international efforts. The Political Declaration and the Action Plan (see A/64/92), emanating from the Commission on Narcotic Drugs high-level segment at its fifty-second session in March, build on the political commitments of the 1998 special session documents and highlight the importance of continuing international cooperation in addressing the world drug problem.

We all agree that the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking, sale and consumption of narcotic drugs are pressing and complex global challenges. During the almost two-year-long process of this review, we did not agree on every aspect of addressing the drug problem. Discussion was, at times, contentious, as Governments with differing policies, laws and social systems tried to reach agreement on a way forward. However, working together, we accomplished a great deal. Despite our differences, we reached consensus and adopted a document that breathes life into the treaties. This extends the work that we do into the future and shows that all of us facing a global issue can work together to develop a series of actions to address a scourge that we face at home and abroad.

Those documents represent a strong and continuing consensus on confronting the global drug problem: to attack and disrupt the criminal organizations that traffic in illegal drugs and to bring their leaders to justice; to help rehabilitate drug victims; and perhaps most importantly, to reduce and prevent drug use through education and a range of

health programmes. The Commission's Political Declaration and Plan of Action have set out the goals and the strategy. All of us must now work together to turn those commitments into actions on the ground.

I thank you again, Mr. President, for your efforts to lead us in these discussions, and I urge all Member States to give strong support to enacting these commitments.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is difficult to overstate the significance of the high-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) held in Vienna in March. The proceedings have become the main anti-narcotics event not only of this year but perhaps of the entire decade, since within its framework stock was taken of the great distance the international community has come in achieving the goals formulated in 1998 at the General Assembly's twentieth special session on drugs, and the targets set for future work in this area.

The discussion in Vienna was not easy. States' positions on solving the global drug problem differed substantially. This is reflected in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action (see A/64/92) adopted as a result of the discussion. They enshrine a consensus on an approach that is on the whole balanced, aimed at achieving a solution to the problem of reducing supply and demand for drugs as well as strengthening international cooperation in this area. At the same time, the assessment of the progress made in achieving the goals set at the Assembly's twentieth special session is proving excessively optimistic. In 2008 the world opium harvest was almost double what it was in 1998. These figures speak for themselves. The opium harvest in Afghanistan for the period has more than tripled. The international community has not yet succeeded in finding a realistic alternative to that country's booming drug economy.

The Member States of the United Nations were and remain united in their opinion of the growing threat that the world drug problem presents, despite all the measures taken at the national, regional and international levels. Hence the imperative of establishing a more productive international system for addressing the issue, one capable of responding effectively to the challenges that are emerging. We support this approach wholeheartedly.

We believe that the key element in this system must be combating the production and trafficking of

illegal drugs. In this context, the most acute problem globally is the growing threat stemming from Afghan territory. Regrettably, we are forced to conclude that Afghanistan is an unrivalled leader in opiate production, producing more than 90 per cent of world output. The trade in Afghan opium has now become a transnational threat, not only for countries on the trafficking route and those of final destination, but also for international security as a whole. The results of the discussions during the high-level segment, including those reflected in the report under consideration circulated by the Commission (A/64/92), bear eloquent witness to this issue. We are convinced that the fight against the Afghan drug threat must be conducted on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility, which was once again reaffirmed and reinforced in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action of the CND's high-level segment.

In the opinion of the Russian Federation the basis for stepping up international cooperation in fighting the Afghan drug threat lies in the decisions adopted in the context of the Paris-Moscow process, which operates under the aegis of the United Nations. We feel that it is important to continue to consistently implement the agreements reached at international conferences and other events of the Paris-Moscow process and renew and supplement appropriate decisions in the light of the latest trends in the evolution of the drug situation in and around Afghanistan. In this regard, in our opinion, it is advisable that a third ministerial conference within the context of the Paris-Moscow process be held at the end of 2010.

In our opinion, a fundamental element in the whole array of measures for confronting the Afghan drug threat is the creation of counter-narcotics and financial security belts that encircle Afghanistan. The need for broad and effective cooperation in the context of this initiative is reflected in the final document of the special conference on Afghanistan held in Moscow last March under the aegis of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), including the statement of the member States of the SCO and Afghanistan on the problems of fighting terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, as well as the appropriate plan of action adopted and worked out with the active participation of the Afghan side.

The Russian Federation supports the efforts of Afghanistan in fighting against drugs, notwithstanding

the very difficult situation in the country, including its work to implement a national counter-narcotics strategy. Last March, the Governments of Russia and Afghanistan concluded an agreement on cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, which opens up new prospects for interaction in this area.

We are taking part in staff training for the Afghan drugs police. At present, in the context of the NATO-Russia Council, there is effective implementation of the project for training such staff at the Russian Interior Ministry's All-Russia Institute for Advanced Training in Domodedovo. We intend to develop the potential of this project even further.

Our countries interact through financial intelligence units on the basis of the relevant interagency agreement of 2007 on information exchange. In practical terms, we are talking about efforts aimed at shutting down financial channels used in Afghan drug trafficking and at tracking and seizing the bank accounts of drug gang leaders, who, according to data of the International Narcotics Control Board, control Afghanistan's 90 per cent of worldwide illicit opium production.

We are developing cooperation with the Afghan side through the standing counter-narcotics machinery entitled Operation Channel, created as an appropriate preventive operation under the aegis of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We note in particular the participation of the plenipotentiary representatives of the law enforcement agencies of Afghanistan in Operation Channel in 2009.

The Russian Federation advocates an improvement of mechanisms for coordinating donor assistance to Afghanistan geared to resolving interrelated tasks: the fight against illicit drug trafficking, the restoration of the economy and the maintenance of peace and security in the country. We acknowledge that eradicating the illicit cultivation in Afghanistan of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs should be carried out taking into account the specific characteristics of the individual provinces and the historical and economic aspects of opium cultivation, as well as the fact according to which structures of drug manufacturing groups and terrorist groups grow together. It is important that measures to destroy narcotic drugs plantations in Afghanistan be buttressed by socio-economic

programmes geared to creating legal agricultural production in the relevant provinces.

In providing assistance to the Afghan Government in implementing anti-narcotics operations, it is important to fully tap the potential of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. It is our belief that the measures we have implemented and are proposing against drug trafficking from Afghan territory correspond to the approach enshrined in the final documents of the high-level segment of the CND.

A fundamentally important decision adopted in Vienna was the reaffirmation of the significance of the three anti-narcotics Conventions of the United Nations. They remain the cornerstone of the international drugs control system. We are convinced that that is how it should be.

We note with concern the attempts to undermine the regime set up by these Conventions, to interpret unduly broadly individual provisions of the Conventions and to impose controversial methods of fighting narcotic drugs as a worldwide gold standard, for example, the idea of harm reduction that has been put forward. In our opinion, harm reduction is not science-based and neglects the national, historical and socio-economic conditions for pursuing effective anti-drugs policy. In the overwhelming majority of States, the effectiveness of measures of harm reduction has not been validated by the experts of the International Narcotics Control Board.

In this regard, we feel that attempts in any form to push through the inclusion of this controversial concept in the fundamental United Nations documents on drugs issues are destructive. Regrettably, attempts were made to do just that in March in Vienna, and they are being carried out now as well. It is our firm conviction that instead of enfeebling the existing basis for international anti-narcotics cooperation, the States Members of the United Nations must make additional efforts to strengthen this basis. This approach would fully correspond to the decisions of the high-level segment on this issue.

In 2014, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs is due to analyse what has been done to achieve the targets set forth in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action of the high-level segment of the CND (see A/64/92). The time frame for implementing the tasks set forth in these documents is short. We call on States more actively to carry out the appropriate work. We are

ready for constructive interaction on all issues related to the global drugs problem. We intend to continue to make the necessary efforts to resolve this problem.

Mr. Koshyari (India): Let me at the outset welcome the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem (see A/64/92), which was adopted at the high-level meeting of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs in March 2009. Let me assure the Assembly of India's commitment to the implementation of the Declaration.

Let me also express my appreciation for the work done on the world drug problem by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through its various initiatives and reports and in helping carry forward the drug control agenda through this important and timely review process.

Over the past several decades, some measure of success has been achieved in putting in place an international framework on drug control, notably the three United Nations Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988, and the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly in 1998.

This year's annual World Drug Report has made the significant observation that there is evidence of reduction in the cultivation of crops for drugs and a decline in the demand for illicit drugs globally. However, despite international efforts towards this end, illicit drug production, supply, consumption and traffic remains a major global challenge that affects the entire international community. It is therefore important not only to reflect on the path traversed so far, but also to build on the gains, incremental as they may be, and translate them into an effective and coordinated international response, while charting a future course of action.

India's resolve to fight the menace of illicit drugs remains steadfast. We will continue to adhere to the commitments made in the three United Nations Conventions as well as in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action aimed at enhancing international cooperation to counter the world drug problem, adopted at the June 1998 special session of the General Assembly.

India is one of the world's principal producers of licit opium. We seek to ensure a balance in the demand and supply of licit opiates required for genuine medical, medicinal and scientific purposes.

The legal regime in India is defined by the 1985 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, which bring drug-related offences within their ambit. Due to persistent efforts during the last two decades, the situation of illicit drugs in India has changed considerably. Significant success has been achieved by the Narcotics Control Bureau of India in recent years in the seizure and destruction of various illicit narcotic drugs and in combating trafficking through interdiction and investigation.

India supports a balanced approach that relies on the destruction of illicit drug crops while at the same time providing alternative means of livelihood to the farmers adversely affected by such destruction. Such an approach could be utilized in Afghanistan as well, which must become the focus of the problem in the foreseeable future.

There is also a need to control amphetamine-type stimulants and precursors, an area where significant gaps exist in the international control regime. We urge the UNODC to bridge the asymmetry in the regulatory framework between different countries by helping expand precursor control regulation to cover all countries as a shared responsibility.

We must raise social awareness about the adverse consequences of drug addiction, particularly among the younger generation, which is one of the most vulnerable groups. Apart from stringent legal measures, societies should strive to inculcate the highest moral values in our youth through the teachings of our great philosophers and religious thinkers.

Incorporating practices such as yoga and meditation in our daily lives is also helpful in weaning youth away from toxic and destructive lifestyles that lead to problems like drug abuse. However, we are conscious that national efforts alone cannot effectively address this problem. Combating the menace of illicit drugs requires Member States to develop a cohesive, balanced and integrated approach to the issue.

In this context, India reaffirms its commitment to work closely with other countries, both bilaterally and

through regional and international collaboration, to achieve our common goal of a world free of illicit drugs. Collective, coordinated and concrete strategies should be devised to effectively combat illegal drug production, consumption and trade so as to jointly address the challenges in the coming years.

Drug trafficking is more often a transnational crime and one of the main sources of financing for terrorist activities. It cannot be tackled individually or in isolation. Bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation must be recognized as a key element of any strategy to effectively combat this problem. We cannot succeed in rooting out the threat posed by illicit drug supply and production without also addressing the destructive linkages with narcoterrorism, the arms trade and money-laundering.

To make a real difference, the international community must break the pernicious nexus among drug trafficking, terrorism, money-laundering, the illegal arms trade and transnational organized crime. This is of particular concern to India, which is painfully familiar with the issue after having suffered from years of terrorism. The international community must come together to take a coordinated, far-sighted and global approach. Crucial in this context is the need now to adopt the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which has been in negotiations at the United Nations for years.

I reiterate India's unwavering commitment to working closely with the international community in eliminating the world drug and attendant problems, including narcoterrorism and the financing of terrorism through drugs.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): In 1998, when we gathered at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly to adopt the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction (see resolution S-20/3) and measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem (see resolution S-20/4), we did so in order to declare our collective commitment to address the world drug problem.

A decade later, the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs reviewed the progress made in implementing the 1998 Political Declaration and declared that

“the drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all

humanity, in particular youth, our most precious asset. Furthermore, the world drug problem undermines sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions, including efforts to eradicate poverty, and threatens national security and the rule of law. Drug trafficking and abuse pose a major threat to the health, dignity and hopes of millions of people and their families and lead to the loss of human lives". (A/64/92, para. 13)

That is the devastating impact of the world drug problem.

Building on the achievements made since 1998, limited though they may be, the high-level segment adopted a Declaration which embodies one clear message: that the drug problem remains global and thus in need of concerted global efforts to reduce demand and supply of illicit drugs and enhance alternative development, and that the links between drug trafficking, money-laundering and other types of transnational organized crime cannot be overlooked, but can only be effectively addressed through judicial cooperation.

It further reiterates that countries have a common and shared responsibility to solve the world drug problem through a balanced and comprehensive approach and stresses health as the basis for international drug policy and as a valuable tool to spur national efforts and strengthen international cooperation. Clearly, no one country or region can seriously confront the drug problem alone, for we are all affected — perhaps some more than others. Africa is no exception.

At a time when the African Union, complemented by its subregional organizations, is establishing measures to effect regional integration, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime are causing a serious regression in sustainable development in many parts of Africa and threatening the security and sovereignty of many of our countries. At the same time, our young people are becoming victims of drug abuse at an alarming rate. In other words, Africa is no longer just a transit route for drug traffic. Cannabis is increasingly being cultivated in some parts of our continent and it is well known that cannabis is one of the most widely produced, trafficked and abused illicit drugs worldwide.

The convening of special Security Council meetings on the situation in West Africa points to the seriousness and urgency of the problem. Hence, an appeal was made to the international community to mobilize resources to help build capacity in the countries of the subregion so as to enable them to confront this threat at the national and cross-border levels.

According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), some parts of Africa have become hubs for cocaine trafficking from Latin America to Europe. The report goes on to say that illicit income generated from trafficking of cocaine surpasses the gross domestic product of some African countries. In parts of West Africa, the gravity of the situation necessitated the adoption of a Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in West Africa by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States.

Lest we forget: a number of African countries are just now emerging from conflict and thus facing a real danger of backsliding into poor governance and social and economic strife and are in the process of rendering futile our collective efforts at peacebuilding.

Many African countries are facing challenges resulting from drug trafficking — especially border control issues. Therefore, the capacity of law enforcement personnel must be improved to enable them to effectively confront these challenges. Furthermore, national drug detection laboratories in many countries are either non-existent or need strengthening.

The urgency of this situation was reiterated at the nineteenth African regional Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA-Africa), held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 12 to 16 October. HONLEA-Africa adopted a number of recommendations to develop effective drug law enforcement, intelligence-led operational responses, national responses in support of regional efforts, initiatives in the fight against illicit drug trafficking, as well as recommendations on the impact of the Internet and other electronic media on drug trafficking and the impact of forensic services in Africa.

The grim picture relating to drugs is a challenge not only to African countries, but to the international community, and therefore calls for full implementation

of the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention. The international community must continue to complement the efforts of the African Union Commission and the African countries in this regard. There is evidence that sustained and collective efforts through international and regional cooperation to counter the illicit production, trafficking and abuse of drugs can yield positive results. Therefore, technical assistance and support must be provided to the most-affected transit States in Africa and elsewhere in order to deal with this growing problem.

Like many African countries, Namibia is affected by drug trafficking. It is becoming a transit country and is also gradually developing a consumption problem. In response to this challenge, the Government has undertaken a number of initiatives, including a combating of drug abuse bill, which has been served before Parliament and is currently being finalized before its enactment into law. Furthermore, Namibia has enacted legislation on the prevention of organized crime.

We have also ratified the Southern African Development Community's Protocol on Combating Illicit Drugs, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the Protocol of 25 March 1972, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. In its endeavours to manage and implement those various drug control and management instruments, Namibia has adopted a national drug control master plan, which is, in essence, a multiagency coordinating framework.

The review by the high-level segment shows that not only have we made limited progress, but that new challenges have emerged. For example, women and girls are increasingly being used as couriers in drug trafficking. This is a growing phenomenon, not only in Africa but worldwide. Hence at the last session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, a resolution was adopted which, inter alia, urges Member States to implement broad-based programmes aimed at preventing women and girls from being used as couriers for drug trafficking. It also requests the UNODC to assist States in developing programmes and implementing alternative development policies to counter the use and participation of women in the illicit drug trade, and to take proper penal measures against

organized criminal groups that use women and girls as couriers.

The resolution also encourages States to consider establishing financial assistance programmes to support income-generating projects for the educational, economic and social development of women and girls, as well as for the rehabilitation of women and girls involved in drug trafficking.

Namibia reaffirms its support to UNODC and wishes to place on record its appreciation for the contribution of the International Narcotics Control Board in monitoring the implementation of the international drug control conventions. We commend the Executive Director of the UNODC, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, and his team, for their effective leadership and efforts in raising the profile of the impact of the world drug problem in all its dimensions. The UNODC's effectiveness in implementing the mandate of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to meet the increasing needs of Member States hinges on how effectively we, the Member States, translate our collective political will into greater effectiveness for the UNODC.

Drug control cannot be left to the goodwill of a few Member States. Simply put, the UNODC cannot be expected to effectively carry out its functions when it is ill-equipped to do so. The time has come for an increase in the general purpose funds. For this reason, Namibia welcomes Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/13 on improving the governance and financial situation of the UNODC, which we view as a first step towards strengthening drug control.

The adoption of the Political Declaration by the high-level segment is a means to an end. We need to continue to effectively monitor its implementation and the emerging trends in the world drug problem. In this context, Namibia welcomes the recommendations for the Economic and Social Council to devote one of its high-level segments to a theme related to the world drug problem and for the General Assembly to convene a special session on this issue.

In conclusion, allow me to stress that only through collective and coordinated efforts can we follow through on the commitment put forth in the Declaration adopted at the high-level segment to actively promote a society free of drug abuse in order to ensure that all people can live in health, dignity and peace, with security and prosperity.

The Acting President: Before proceeding further, I would like to consult Member States about inviting the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, to make a statement on this occasion.

If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, without setting a precedent, to invite the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, to make a statement at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision just taken and without setting a precedent, I now give the floor to Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Mr. Costa (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime): The ministerial session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs took place in Vienna last March under the chairmanship of Namibia. I would like to thank Ambassador Ashipala-Musavyi, who just spoke, for her extraordinary leadership during the session itself. At the meeting in Vienna there was broad consensus in favour of the international drug control system that has evolved at the United Nations over the past half century.

However, in the Political Declaration adopted at the meeting, Member States acknowledged that “drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all humanity, in particular youth” (A/64/92, para. 13). Furthermore, the Declaration stated that the world drug problem “undermines sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions ... and threatens national security”. That is why Member States agreed to a balanced, evidence-based and health-centred Plan of Action.

The main challenge is to reduce demand for drugs, which we refer to as the demand-control aspect of drug policy. Governments are therefore urged to bring health back to the centre of drug control. People who are battling addiction — which is an illness — should receive treatment; they should not be facing jail sentences. More resources are needed for prevention and treatment. Indeed, the bulk of resources have been spent on law enforcement against drug addicts. More

resources are needed for prevention and treatment. Therefore, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization have joined forces to achieve universal access to drug treatment.

As the Plan of Action says, demand reduction should be done in a way that guarantees the human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms of those concerned. Furthermore, drug control measures should be based on scientific evidence, not ideology or political expediency, as has happened most of the time.

On the supply side — the other part of the equation — the Plan of Action highlights the importance of eradicating poverty, not just drugs or crops. More attention should be devoted to addressing the new trends — and new threats, for example the threat of synthetic drug production — by improving forensic capacity and precursor control. It would be a tragedy if the control of botanical drugs such as cocaine, heroine and opium were undermined by a new wave of production and use of synthetic drugs such as methamphetamines and Ecstasy — especially in the developing world — a wave which we have not yet identified.

If we can reduce the number of drug users in the world and if we can reduce the supply of drugs, there would of course be less business for the drug traffickers who make billions of dollars a year by exploiting a very lucrative market. This money is being used to buy not only the real estate, economic assets and luxury goods of the world’s countries, but it is also spent buying power and elections, both in countries where illicit crops are grown and in those through which they are trafficked. Therefore, we insist that crime control is both important in itself and one of the keys to drug control.

The legal instruments to fight crime and corruption already exist, and they have been approved by the United Nations. For example, the United Nations Convention against Corruption can cut down the bribery and fraud that enable drug trafficking and can assist States in seizing the proceeds of crime. Another example is the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime, which was negotiated in Vienna 10 years ago — we are indeed approaching its tenth anniversary — and which should be used by States to control and prevent all types of crime, not just drug trafficking.

Regional and multilateral cooperation is essential to counter the transnational threat posed by drug trafficking. For example, we have stimulated the successful development of the Paris Pact, the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre soon to be inaugurated in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and the triangular initiative that we have promoted between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. With the support of UNODC, regional cooperation to control drugs and crime is also being strengthened in the Balkans, West Africa, the Caribbean and Central America and, soon, East Africa.

In conclusion, the General Assembly special session process did not solve the world drug problem, but it did demonstrate that drugs can be controlled, given the right political and financial investment on the basis of a balanced approach.

Moving forward, in line with the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, States must keep in mind the three-pronged strategy that the ministers endorsed when they met in Vienna: first, the focus on health to reduce demand; secondly, the focus on development to reduce supply; and thirdly, the improvement of justice, security and the rule of law to tackle the crime associated with drug trafficking.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its plenary meeting to consider the results of the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and this stage of its consideration of agenda item 105.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.