



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 September 2014

Original: English

Substantive session of 2014

High-level segment

Summary record of the 43rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 15 July 2014, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)

Contents

Social and human rights questions

(d) Narcotic drugs

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Social and human rights questions

(d) Narcotic drugs (E/2013/28/Add.1, A/69/87-E/2014/80 and E/2014/28; E/INCB/2013/1)

1. **Mr. Sajdik** (Austria), President of the Economic and Social Council, said that the world drug problem had long been a concern of the Council. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, referred to such questions as alternative development as a means of addressing the problem. The Declaration also called for a special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, for which the Commission would lead the preparations. The purpose of the Council's discussion was to link the world drug problem to the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

2. Drug addiction was a health concern, and many States had adopted national drug strategies that included prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, rehabilitation, recovery and social reintegration. Such strategies should be strengthened using scientific evidence and taking into account the challenges specific to vulnerable groups.

3. A transparent and inclusive discussion based on scientific evidence was of critical importance. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was to be commended for its work in alternative development in countries such as Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar. Austria had been a supporter of UNODC projects in the field of alternative development for many years and was currently supporting three of its programmes in Latin America.

4. Any efforts to tackle the world drug problem should respect human rights, democracy, equality, solidarity, and the rule of law; such efforts would require international cooperation and the participation of all relevant actors. Civil society, in particular the scientific community, non-governmental organizations and young people, played an important role in addressing the world drug problem. Increased cooperation among relevant United Nations bodies and

entities was essential to promote sustainable development and take effective and efficient action against illicit drugs and organized crime.

Address by the Secretary-General

5. **Mr. Ban** Ki-moon (Secretary-General), speaking via video link, said that, while the international community was working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to shape a new long-term vision for sustainable development, illicit drugs and organized crime were undermining lives and devastating societies. Drugs and crime corroded fragile countries, weakened criminal justice systems and other State institutions and destroyed communities. Development activities, however, could address those concerns; for that reason, it was crucial to help farmers choose alternative crops for cultivation and to work towards the stabilization of global markets. Decent jobs had to be created for those in need. The international community would be responsible not only for combating drugs and crime once such measures were undertaken but also for promoting progress and peace.

6. He hoped that the international community would advance discussions on those critical issues as it shaped a new vision for sustainable development. The discussions would pave the way for the success of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016, which would be a valuable opportunity for Member States to exchange ideas and lessons learned in their efforts to address the problem. The international community should work together to create a world free of illicit drugs and organized crime.

Remarks by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

7. **Mr. Fedotov** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), speaking via video link, said that illicit drugs interfered with the international community's efforts to promote peace, development and security. Organized crime and illicit drugs undermined the rule of law and the delivery of health and education services, and led to corruption and money-laundering, which hindered the growth of legitimate businesses and efforts aimed at poverty eradication and environmental protection.

8. Alternative development programmes could address those challenges. Programmes led by UNODC had helped to reduce the land area used for the cultivation of illicit crops and had enabled farmers to escape the grip of drug lords in such countries as Afghanistan and Myanmar through the creation of lawful jobs, building of markets and improvement of basic infrastructure. A programme in Colombia had delivered \$32 million worth of technical assistance. Over 146,000 families and nearly 8,000 rural settlements had received assistance, and 614 organizations had been strengthened through the training and empowerment of women. Similar work had been undertaken in Peru, where the top 13 farming enterprises currently sold approximately \$200 million worth of licit agricultural products each year.

9. Transmitting knowledge as widely as possible was also vital to addressing the world drug problem. Countries should employ existing knowledge and skills within their borders to strengthen their own alternative development programmes. The goal of the international community should be to provide farmers with more choices, thereby encouraging them to move away from illicit crops and to embrace a life of equality, fairness and prosperity.

*High-level panel discussion on the theme of
“Sustainable development and the world drug problem:
challenges and opportunities”*

10. **Mr. Shamaa** (Chair, Commission on Narcotic Drugs) said that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had long promoted alternative development as one way to replace the cultivation of illicit crops with that of alternative crops, with a view to alleviating poverty and hunger, and promoting sustainability. The link between sustainable development and the world drug problem had been consistently discussed in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016. The Commission had acknowledged the potential of the illicit drug trade to adversely affect the social, economic, cultural and political foundations of society and to undermine sustainable development, and had noted the negative impact of drugs on work productivity and family cohesion. Although the Member States differed in their views of how that link should be reflected in such policy debates as the post-2015 development agenda, there was some agreement on what the focus should be in the coming years.

11. Firstly, Member States should receive practical, operational assistance at field level, and special attention should be paid to the needs of the developing world. Secondly, the international community should invest in drug abuse prevention and treatment for young people. The slogan of the 2014 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, “A message of hope: drug use disorders are preventable and treatable”, was aimed at having drug users treated from a medical rather than a criminal perspective. Youth should also be more involved in the work of the Commission, and greater efforts to achieve that would take place as it prepared for the special session.

12. Lastly, addressing the world drug problem and fostering sustainable development were the responsibility of the international community. The Commission relied on the input of a broad range of stakeholders. Having already established contact with several of them, it looked forward to beginning discussions with others, in particular the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization, whose contributions would be highly important.

13. The Commission was ready to strengthen its dialogue and interaction with the Economic and Social Council. He encouraged the Council to consider convening a high-level event related to the world drug problem during its high-level segment in 2015, which would allow it to make a valuable contribution to the substantive preparations for the special session. The world drug problem required a global response through joint efforts to address it.

14. **Mr. Sinhaseni** (Thailand) said that his Government had extensive experience in using alternative development to address the supply side of the drug problem. Stalled development and lack of opportunity impelled individuals to cultivate illicit crops. As early as 1969, the King of Thailand had introduced a programme that enabled opium cultivators to substitute that crop with legal and viable produce such as rice, coffee beans, and organic fruits and vegetables. The implementation of crop substitution and rural development programmes had helped to provide education and health care to local communities. As a result, opium production in Thailand had decreased to an almost insignificant level, while former opium producers had seen their income increased tenfold. That experience had shown that alternative development could address the root causes of the drug problem, namely poverty and lack of opportunity. In

Thailand, two main government agencies carried out implementation and advocacy work, including the implementation of alternative development projects and strategies, while civil society organizations played a significant role in implementing alternative development at the local level.

15. The model of alternative development adopted in Thailand had worked in other contexts as well. For example, the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, a centre of excellence in alternative development, had provided technical assistance in such Asian countries as Myanmar, Afghanistan and Indonesia, often in collaboration with UNODC. Thailand and Myanmar had signed a memorandum of understanding under which projects would be implemented in 58 villages in Myanmar over a six-year period, and projects were also under way in Latin American countries, including Colombia and Peru. In addition to sharing its experience and technological assistance, Thailand was actively engaged in multilateral advocacy work.

16. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, presented by Thailand and Peru at the 2012 high-level International Conference on Alternative Development, had been approved by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [68/197](#). The Principles stressed that an integrated approach to alternative development should be implemented together with broader drug control policies and in line with the three conventions on drug control. By its resolution [57/1](#), the Commission had decided to organize an international seminar on the implementation of the Guiding Principles.

17. Alternative development strategies should be included in the post-2015 development agenda to help reduce the cultivation of illicit crops, provide viable opportunities, and foster peaceful and inclusive societies. As Vice-Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Thailand would continue to advocate for alternative development and contribute to the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

18. **Ms. Chinery-Hesse** (Commissioner, West Africa Commission on Drugs) said that Governments in the West African region were particularly fearful of the disruption that the world drug problem could cause to burgeoning economic growth. The West African Commission on Drugs had focused its attention on

those suffering from drug addiction, and had engaged with regional government officials, non-governmental organizations, members of civil society and entities such as the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union.

19. Even as some regions stepped up their fight against the drug problem, other regions, such as Africa, became increasingly popular targets of illicit trade. It was therefore crucial to look at the drug problem as a global issue rather than a regional one. Extremist groups and individuals in positions of power, such as security personnel, had been competing for access to the spoils of drug trafficking, greatly interfering with the preservation of law and order; the result was increased political instability in such countries as Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde and disruption of the electoral process.

20. Unfortunately, small dealers, couriers and drug users were being arrested and imprisoned while the heads of drug trafficking networks remained at large. International cooperation was necessary to curb that tendency, in particular as existing institutions did not have the necessary resilience and resources to handle the situation. Continued action in the current direction would only put more pressure on an already strained criminal justice system.

21. Drug addiction should be viewed as a health issue. The United Republic of Tanzania, for example, treated drug users in hospital instead of imprisoning them, and the Commission's research supported that approach. Greater efforts and resources should be channelled into drug treatment and harm reduction facilities and programmes. The world drug problem should be tackled in a holistic manner, in particular with a view to providing alternative livelihoods and supporting alternative development.

22. **Dr. Naidoo** (President, International Narcotics Control Board) said that failure to address such issues as drug abuse and addiction, as well as the production, cultivation and trafficking of illicit drugs, would prevent communities from developing in a sustainable manner. As the world grew increasingly connected, the international community should exercise its shared responsibility in addressing the supply of and demand for illicit drugs.

23. The three international drug conventions that guided State action in addressing the world drug problem were monitored and promoted by the

International Narcotics Control Board. The international drug control system sought to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific uses and to prevent their diversion to illicit channels, trafficking and abuse. It was important to ensure the availability of controlled drugs for medical purposes, as untold suffering and pain were prevented through their appropriate use. Although the international community took a balanced approach to reducing the supply of and demand for illicit drugs, ongoing debates had resulted in increased attention to drug treatment and prevention. Those strategies, often viewed as an alternative to law enforcement, were generally associated with drug demand reduction but could also be applied to supply reduction.

24. The illicit cultivation of crops from which plant-based drugs were produced was interlinked with such social ills as poverty, lack of educational opportunities and disenfranchisement, but was often their result rather than their cause. Over the years, the Board had drawn attention to the benefit of sustainable development, including alternative livelihoods, and had advocated a comprehensive approach that provided for viable economic alternatives and encouraged the development of infrastructure. The concept of alternative development had evolved from crop substitution to the promotion of rural development in general and the provision of legitimate, sustainable livelihoods for former cultivators of illicit crops. However, given the interlinked nature of supply and demand, that concept should be expanded to include urban areas.

25. Because some of those involved in illicit crop cultivation were also drug users, it was important to include mental health services, drug abuse treatment and aftercare services in alternative development efforts. Drug use had increased along drug trafficking routes and in major production areas, and street distributors also suffering from addiction required access to preventive education and treatment programmes. Demand reduction and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes should therefore be integrated into alternative development programmes whenever possible.

26. Alternative development programmes also played a critical role in preventing and reducing the environmental impact of illicit drug cultivation and manufacture. Such programmes should be integrated with law enforcement and drug abuse prevention and

treatment activities as part of comprehensive and sustained national development programmes aimed at raising the economic and social well-being of the entire population. Programmes should include not only the cultivation of alternative crops but also the development of infrastructure, viable means of transporting legal products to market, and health-care and education services. Alternative livelihood programmes would also help strengthen governance and stability.

27. Civil society was engaged in praiseworthy work to build social cohesion and prevent and treat drug abuse. An effective international drug control system would facilitate sustainable and equitable development, but its effectiveness would depend on the implementation of the three drug control conventions by those States that had developed and acceded to them.

28. While some would argue for an alternative approach to the world drug problem, such as the legalization of certain drugs for medical use, it was important to recall that the drug control conventions called for a balance between supply reduction and demand reduction. They provided States with a measure of flexibility in their implementation, including with respect to sanctions for drug-related offences, which could take the form of treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Although the conventions did not preclude States from adopting stricter measures, the Board had repeatedly encouraged them to apply the principle of proportionality, including by abolishing the death penalty for drug-related offences.

29. Given the high stakes, the international community should take an integrated and common-sense approach based on shared responsibility in elaborating the post-2015 development agenda. The world drug problem was also a health issue, and poor health precluded sustainable development.

30. **Mr. Lale-Demoz** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) said that UNODC was keenly aware of the close relationship between alternative development and the Millennium Development Goals. The viability and sustainability of rural livelihood programmes increased in direct proportion to the existence of sound drug policies, a strong commitment to rural development programmes, and the full participation of local farming communities

in the design and implementation of sustainable livelihood schemes.

31. Consistent and unequivocal illicit crop reduction policies and enforcement of the rule of law in full compliance with human rights standards were fundamental to bring security and sustainable development to rural areas threatened or overwhelmed by organized crime groups and illicit markets. Integrated social prevention policies involving all relevant ministries and civil society organizations were equally critical to address inequity and combat illicit markets.

32. The international community should also ensure a sustained financial and political commitment. International financial institutions should continue to mainstream alternative development and integrated social prevention programmes into their poverty reduction and country assistance strategies. Despite the diverse social, economic, cultural and legal realities of countries, there was a set of cross-cutting international standards that could be applied to a variety of settings.

33. Alternative development, eradication and law enforcement formed a multi-pronged approach to supply reduction. However, such efforts should be properly sequenced and balanced with development efforts. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development had been adopted at a time of fiscal austerity; at present, however, broader rural development interventions were needed to sustainably reduce illicit crop cultivation and mitigate problems in the areas of security, justice and the rule of law.

34. Alternative development programmes had helped to reduce poverty and food insecurity and had increased licit income through targeted and integrated long-term assistance. For example, Thailand had significantly reduced the cultivation of opium poppy, enabling hill tribe communities to benefit from sustainable licit income and improve their security, health and development prospects.

35. Poverty and food insecurity remained two of the most pressing challenges to countries' efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. UNODC programmes in Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic focused on strengthening food security and providing sustainable livelihood assistance, including through the introduction of new farming techniques, non-formal and vocational training programmes, enhanced access to marketing and credit

saving opportunities, and the development of non-opium sources of income. In Afghanistan, alternative development programmes were aimed at strengthening and diversifying licit sources of income and the improvement of infrastructure. However, food security was only one component of alternative development; opportunities outside of subsistence farming were needed to truly improve the socioeconomic conditions of farming communities. That would require the promotion of commercially viable and sustainable cash crops for local and export markets.

36. The strengthening of farmers' organizations in South American countries through alternative development programmes had improved the social and economic situations of tens of thousands of families. In Peru, the value of products sold in national and export markets by farm enterprises was \$200 million per year. In Colombia, 614 farmers' associations were selling alternative development products competitively in local markets and their exports, valued at over \$30 million in 2013, were rising yearly.

37. UNODC alternative programmes also focused on the empowerment of women. In Peru, to promote environmentally sustainable agricultural development, women had been offered training in food security, quality and nutritional value of food crops, marketing of cash crops, agricultural best practices, business administration and managerial decision-making. In Afghanistan, women's empowerment had been achieved through the establishment of agroenterprises and women-to-women transfers of entrepreneurial skills. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, women were successfully leading small-farmer agricultural businesses. In Colombia, over 150,000 women had enrolled in business management training programmes over the previous decade.

38. Environmental protection and climate change were also addressed by alternative development programmes. In recent years alternative development had contributed to the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 7 in central and south-east Asia and in South America. Sustainable forestry and agroforestry management plans had been used to generate jobs and income in the Plurinational State of Bolivia; in Peru, vast regions previously degraded by coca cultivation had been reforested and sustainable agroforestry practices had been introduced. In Colombia, some 300,000 migrant farm families had been given title to over 98,000 hectares of land,

thereby reducing migration and the destruction of forests. Incentives provided by the Colombian Government had also led to the sequestration of 75 million tons of carbon dioxide through massive reforestation programmes. In Afghanistan, UNODC has supported long-term land stabilization projects and helped build resilience in communities affected by climate change. It had also contributed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 6 by improving health services in many marginalized areas where illicit crops were cultivated.

39. The international community should scale up development assistance. Technical assistance reached less than a quarter of the farmers who cultivated illicit crops. Sustainable development and social protection were key to addressing the world drug problem, but were also valid for counteracting other forms of transnational organized crime. The relationship between development-oriented drug control and crime prevention, sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda was undeniable. UNODC was committed to furthering the Millennium Development Goals and anticipated the incorporation of the post-2015 development goals into its comprehensive development-oriented drug control and crime prevention strategies. It stood ready to assist in the preparatory process for the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

40. **Mr. Otárola Peñaranda** (Peru), Executive Director of the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs, accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that his Government had tripled the budget for implementation of the national anti-drug strategy and reduced illicit coca leaf cultivation by 17 per cent in 2013, a historic achievement. However, in order to successfully address the drug problem, coca eradication efforts must be followed by sustainable development. The Peruvian strategy — which included interdiction, sanctions, prevention and treatment of drug use, and a cross-cutting commitment to linking international and national efforts — had reduced illicit drug trafficking and abuse dramatically and encouraged producers to transition to legal economic activities.

41. The Government had adapted its strategy to the specificities and needs of each region of a heterogeneous country. Coca eradication and productive reconversion of lands addressed narcotics trafficking directly. Subversive groups in the Monzón district had long

hindered the Government's efforts to extend its authority and democratic institutions to the area; however, the situation had improved dramatically over the previous three years owing to the implementation of a plan that employed social inclusion, State investment and environmentally sound policies to promote sustainable development. With an investment \$341 million dollars since 2012, the amount of land dedicated to coca leaf cultivation had been reduced significantly. The cultivation of coffee and cocoa was encouraged in order to counteract the environmental damage caused by illegal coca cultivation. Efforts to raise awareness and build capacity with the use of good agricultural practices would continue. Consequently, after years of violence and social chaos caused by drug trafficking, the national economy had begun to grow significantly. His Government would remain the staunch ally of those who fought against drug trafficking.

Interactive dialogue

42. **Mr. Rogov** (Russian Federation) said that alternative development should play a key role as developing countries strove to counter the illicit cultivation of drugs. An all-encompassing strategy should be used to eradicate poverty, combat organized crime and create a more inclusive society. An alternative development strategy combined with local, national and international efforts within the banking sector would strengthen the rule of law.

43. Following the departure of international armed forces from Afghanistan, currently the world's largest producer of heroin, the international community should devise an alternative development programme that would create viable alternatives for Afghan farmers, improve the lives of citizens and increase stability.

44. He hoped that the current discussion would produce a clear definition of alternative development to be used in the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem and the formulation of sustainable development goals.

45. **Mr. Momeni** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite its limited resources, his Government had devoted significant sums and human resources to the efforts to combat illicit drugs. While his Government cooperated closely with European countries on the issue, the overall level of cooperation was insufficient and should be increased. Recently, the

Islamic Republic of Iran had worked closely with other States in the region, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Addressing the world drug problem was the responsibility of the international community and required an international response.

46. **Ms. Abascal** (Cuba) said that the world drug problem adversely affected citizen health and security, social cohesion, the integrity of democratic institutions, and public policies and development potential. The problem should be addressed through a comprehensive, balanced and multidisciplinary approach based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities and a focus on individual well-being and the prevention of crime and violence. Drug use was a public health concern requiring policies that prioritized prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reinsertion. Relevant strategies and policies should take into account the differing realities of Member States while respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

47. Cuba had observed positive results from prevention programmes where collaborative work was performed among public health, education and judicial services, with the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations. Strategies to treat drug dependency that provided drug users with medical care, including rehabilitation and social reinsertion services, had also yielded good results.

48. International cooperation and the exchange of useful information in an atmosphere of mutual trust were essential to addressing the world drug problem and associated crimes. She requested the representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to describe the current challenges in that regard with respect to technical assistance.

49. **Ms. Mejía Vélez** (Colombia) said that her Government's fight against drug trafficking had been costly, but progress had been achieved with the support of UNODC. It was impossible to successfully address the world drug problem without solid institutions, and the relevant communities must also be involved. Rural communities that played an active role in alternative development programmes could begin to participate as actors rather than as mere recipients.

50. As part of its peacebuilding efforts, Colombia had signed an agreement with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia in which it had been clearly stated that the foundation for building a

sustained and lasting peace required alternatives to improve the well-being of populations affected by illicit crops. The success of her country's alternative development policies and the recognition of persistent challenges, including the production, trafficking and illicit consumption of drugs, should encourage the international community to question the effectiveness of the current strategies employed to address the world drug problem. The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem would offer the world community an opportunity to evaluate those strategies and to consider the issues of resources and national cooperation.

51. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled "The future we want", which would guide the work of defining the post-2015 development agenda, had established that the three pillars of sustainable development were social, economic and environmental. It would be counterproductive to include specific aims in the sustainable development goals without establishing the link between sustainable development and the world drug problem. At the special session, the international community should devise a comprehensive and balanced strategy to deal with all dimensions of the problem and decide how to implement the relevant policies.

52. **Mr. Yao Shaojun** (China) said that his Government attached great importance to drug control. The President had called for increased efforts to halt drug-related criminal activities and the spread of the drug problem. A multi-pronged approach should be taken to treat the problem at its source in a systematic and integrated way using a combination of legal, administrative, educational, and cultural measures to mobilize the general public and safeguard the mental and physical health of the people.

53. Drug control efforts should be stepped up and the related guidelines and principles of work should be mapped out by 2020. International cooperation in those efforts was essential. China, for its part, had undertaken highly productive work with members of the international community under bilateral and multilateral frameworks for demand reduction, drug enforcement and personnel training. It had also provided technical assistance to countries such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar in order to lift local populations out of poverty and reduce their dependency on the drug-related economy. Thanks

to the efforts of all parties, in 2013 poppy cultivation in northern Myanmar had shown its first decrease in six years.

54. Currently, the quantity of drugs available, the number of drug users, the diversion of precursor chemicals, and the emergence of new difficult-to-control psychotropic substances were on the rise. Developing countries were the main victims of those challenges; it was therefore important to strengthen cooperation and promote a situation that would benefit all parties. China called on all countries to share the responsibility of taking comprehensive and balanced measures to tackle the supply and demand of drugs. The international community should step up its efforts, particularly in the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent, and provide funding and technical support in those areas. It should also provide more funding and support to UNODC.

55. UNODC, the International Narcotics Control Board, and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs were making valuable contributions and China would continue to support their efforts and take an active role in the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. His Government would continue to work with the international community to solve the world drug problem and promote sustainable development.

56. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Guatemala) asked whether alternative strategies similar to those that encouraged the switch from illicit to licit crop cultivation had been considered for use with drug traffickers, particularly in those States where drug trafficking was the primary source of income for a large portion of the population.

57. The United Nations had made it clear to the world that the production, transport and consumption of drugs were major issues that required a collective response. The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem would, it was to be hoped, raise awareness further and prompt practical action. Guatemala could not achieve sustainable development without addressing the manifold issues caused by drug trafficking.

58. His Government had worked at the regional, national, and international levels to promote the idea of joining forces to combat the world drug problem, including at the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, which it had hosted in 2013.

59. **Mr. Otárola Peñaranda** (Peru), Executive Director of the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs, said that programmes aimed at eradicating illicit crop cultivation were insufficient unless accompanied by awareness-raising efforts involving all relevant stakeholders, and investment in alternative crops, soil recovery and technical training programmes. Such efforts, if continued, would result in a virtuous cycle that would demonstrate the product and profit potential of alternative crop cultivation.

60. **Mr. Lale-Demoz** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) said that there were three fundamental challenges to consider with respect to addressing the world drug problem. The first was the consistent and committed implementation of international conventions on the matter. Those countries that had seriously incorporated the provisions of the conventions into their legislation had made greater progress than those that had not. The second challenge concerned domestic coordination. Social protection required the intervention of many stakeholders, including civil society. UNODC currently had a joint programme on HIV/AIDS in Geneva involving 11 different United Nations agencies. Civil society should be involved in solving the world drug problem, and international financial institutions would need to organize programmes to help eradicate poverty.

61. In response to the question posed by the representative of Guatemala, he said that alternative development could indeed be employed to combat trafficking. Social programmes implemented in Colombia, Brazil and Mexico to combat urban insecurity were examples of that.

62. **Dr. Naidoo** (President, International Narcotics Control Board) said that the link between alternative development and security was an important area to consider. In situations where there was a high risk of insurgency, farmers were more likely to cultivate illicit crops than risk huge losses. For that reason, in high security risk areas, it was important to identify crops that could be grown quickly and harvested without difficulty.

63. Early child development and the development of resilient families were other areas of great concern. Good progress with regard to the drug problem had been observed in countries that invested in early childhood development and education, particularly the education of drug treatment professionals.

64. To successfully address the world drug problem, the relevant conventions should be implemented in their entirety. Where the full scope of the treaties had been applied, as opposed to just those areas covering supply or demand reduction or alternative development, there had been good, visible results. The International Narcotics Control Board was ready to provide technical assistance to countries and regions that were unable to cope with the drug problem. Cooperation with the United Nations system and the ability of organizations to collaborate on training programmes in various regions were extremely important.

65. **Ms. Chinere-Hesse** (Commissioner, West Africa Commission on Drugs) said that it was important to recall the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities. The perspective of all regions of the world should be taken into account so that, as the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem approached, the Council could develop recommendations that were contextually relevant and implementable.

66. National governments should prioritize the drug problem; however, for the issue to receive the appropriate attention, the link between that problem and its potential impact on national plans and projects should be clearly demonstrated. For that reason, it was crucial to raise awareness about the world drug problem outside of such forums as the current panel discussion, whose attendees were already fully aware of the stakes.

67. The issue raised by the representative of Guatemala concerning alternative livelihoods for transit countries was an important one worthy of reflection. While the introduction of alternative crops had proved beneficial to countries on the supply side of the drug problem, regions used for transit purposes, such as Africa, had few alternatives, particularly when the monetary reward generated by the illicit trafficking greatly surpassed what governments could offer.

68. **Mr. Shamaa** (Chair, Commission on Narcotic Drugs), responding to the comments made by delegations, said that addressing the drug problem required an approach that took into account country-specific situations, challenges and conditions; nevertheless it was important to have a global structure in place as well.

69. The West Africa Commission on Drugs and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had agreed to work more closely together. In addition, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had already begun to take action aimed at raising awareness outside of international forums to address the world drug problem.

70. Many States formerly regarded solely as transit countries were currently witnessing high levels of drug use as well. While rehabilitation was a possibility for drug users and alternative development could assist farmers, there were few options for alternative livelihoods for drug traffickers. That problem had implications for the entire judicial system in individual States, and should be considered carefully.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.