



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Forty-eighth Session
OFFICIAL RECORDS

1658th meeting

Monday, 23 March 1970,
at 4.15 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. J. B. P. MARAMIS (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 5

Narcotic drugs (*continued*):

- (a) Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/4785 and Summary, E/4785/Add.1);
- (b) Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (E/4788 (Summary) and E/INCB/5);
- (c) Technical assistance in narcotics control (E/4789)

1. Mr. CALOVSKI (Yugoslavia) said that Yugoslavia had always attached great importance to the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). Referring to the respective reports of those bodies, he emphasized the importance of international control of psychotropic substances since national protective measures to combat the growing danger resulting from the propagation and abuse of those substances could be really effective only when they were supplemented by international measures.

2. It was clear from the Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/4785) that although it was agreed that there was need both for a new international instrument to control psychotropic substances and for an awareness of the danger to individuals and the community resulting from abuse of those substances, there were considerable differences of opinion as to the scope and degree of control needed. Although a compromise had finally been reached, it was interesting to note that countries where abuse of psychotropic substances was constantly increasing and countries producing the largest quantities of those substances were the ones which advocated somewhat less rigid controls, while countries where production was negligible and abuse was relatively insignificant wanted more rigid controls. The conflict between the desire to eliminate the danger presented by psychotropic substances and the desire to protect to some extent the interests of the producers could become the major obstacle to full and effective measures for controlling those substances, and an attempt should be made to resolve it.

3. His delegation was sorry to see that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs recommended the adoption of an instrument in which not all countries could participate, and it regretted that selfish political attitudes prevailed even within a Commission whose aim was to protect mankind from a grave danger. Nevertheless, it intended to vote, as it had at Geneva, in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the Commission in which it recommends that the Economic and Social Council should convene a conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of the Protocol on Psychotropic Substances.

4. The INCB report (E/INCB/5) on the illicit and uncontrolled production of narcotic drugs could not but arouse concern. It reiterated the need to strengthen the comprehensive measures designed to deal with the situation, especially since traffickers were able to find new sources not subject to control, although controls had become increasingly effective. The problem of drug addiction was increasing daily in scope and complexity as younger people became addicted, and it could be solved only gradually through the work of INCB and the close co-operation of all countries. Yugoslavia, for its part, intended to follow its traditional policy of rigorously combating the dangers of narcotic drugs.

5. Mr. NAITO (Japan) thanked the Director of the Division of Narcotic Drugs and the President of INCB for the very complete and instructive statements they had presented at the previous meeting. When he considered the over-all picture of the situation emerging from those statements and from the reports submitted to the Council, he saw alarming signs which pointed to the gravity of the problem of narcotic drugs; however, he also saw encouraging signs of progress in the field of international co-operation, particularly as reflected in the draft Protocol on Psychotropic Substances which the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had adopted.

6. Although the social problem represented by the abuse of amphetamines and other psychotropic substances was not so serious in Japan as in some other countries, the Japanese Government kept a careful watch over the development of the situation because of its great epidemic potential, which was to a certain extent due to the irresponsible sensationalism of certain publications with regard to some substances, such as LSD. His delegation shared the concern of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs over the need for control measures at both the national and international levels, and it supported the adoption of the three draft resolutions submitted by the Commission, particularly the one concerning the convening of a conference of plenipotentiaries early in 1971.

7. He noted with satisfaction that the number of parties to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961,¹ which had risen from sixty-six to seventy-four since the beginning of the previous year, was increasing steadily, and he fully endorsed the view expressed in paragraph 14 of the INCB report to the effect that it would be desirable for countries not yet parties to that Convention to ratify or accede to it.

8. The most effective way of solving the problem of narcotic drugs would be to reduce the production of the raw materials used in them, which would require the cultivation of other agricultural products to replace them. In view of the alarming increase in the number of drug

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No.: 62.XI.1.

addicts in the world, and especially the extreme youth of some of them, his delegation recognized the need for education in the widest sense and the importance of an exchange of information between countries. It hoped that the Council would note with satisfaction the INCB report, in which those conclusions were expressed.

9. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that he thought the Council could do little more than acknowledge the importance and seriousness of the problem of narcotic drugs and welcome the measures taken to reduce the drug traffic. The United Kingdom supported the three draft resolutions set forth in the Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and thought that if improvements were still needed in the text of the Protocol, that matter could be referred to a conference of plenipotentiaries, as had been proposed. The consideration of the content of the Protocol could also be continued at that conference.

10. Estimates of the expenditure connected with such a conference had been established on the assumption that it would be held at Geneva. The United Kingdom approved the choice of that city, since participants would thus be able to be in constant contact with the staff of WHO.

11. He recognized the active role played by INCB in controlling narcotic drugs and reserved the right to speak later about the Secretary-General's interim report on technical assistance in the narcotics field (E/4789).

12. Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) said that he also wished to congratulate the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the Division of Narcotic Drugs on their role in the struggle against one of the most terrible social evils of the contemporary world. Referring to the epidemic of drug addiction which plagued the United States and which extended to all social levels and even to children between the ages of twelve and fourteen, he said that that evil threatened to assume the proportions of a national disaster in his country, it respected no boundaries and was also spreading in other countries. In that connexion, he observed that one of the best documents before the Council was the interim report of the Secretary-General on technical assistance in the narcotics field, which indicated in paragraph 6 that the number of countries affected by drug addiction was constantly growing and that it existed not only in the developed countries but also in some of the less developed countries. He also drew attention to paragraph 7, concerning the effects of drug abuse on the economy, and paragraph 8 concerning the sources of narcotics. Countries producing narcotic raw materials needed to be encouraged to develop substitute crops or other sources of revenue.

13. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the INCB did not have the capability to deal with the present situation by themselves. The scope of the problem necessitated on the part of all United Nations bodies a concerted world effort such as that proposed in paragraph 9 of the interim report of the Secretary-General (E/4789). The inter-agency meeting of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) mentioned in paragraph 16 and the measures advocated at that meeting were a hopeful development. Most United Nations bodies had a contribution to make to the success of the battle against drug addiction, its causes and sources. These bodies and the various specialized

agencies in such fields as health, education and agriculture should re-examine their programmes to ensure that they took that new priority into account. The Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development should study the social causes of drug addiction and the problem of the social reintegration of addicts. UNICEF also should concern itself with the effort to combat drug abuse. Finally, the Council could request the Secretary-General to prepare, within a reasonable period of time and in consultation with the ACC, a report on the action taken by United Nations bodies to develop effective programmes within their areas of competence. On the basis of such a report it might be possible to elaborate within two years a world plan of action, a *sine qua non* for the success of addiction control. His delegation was prepared to submit a draft resolution on the subject if it received the support of other delegations.

14. His country supported the three draft resolutions set forth in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. It was to be hoped that the conference of plenipotentiaries for the adoption of the draft Protocol on Psychotropic Substances would meet at the beginning of 1971, since it was important that the Protocol should be completed and ratified quickly. The Council needed to decide on the place and duration of the conference. As the results achieved would not be dependent on its duration, four or five weeks should be sufficient: the matter was an urgent one and the calendar of conferences was heavy. In the view of the United States delegation, the conference should be held in New York as had been the case of the conference which drafted the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961. He invited the Secretariat to provide detailed data on the duration, place and cost of the conference.

15. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Economic and Social Council, which studied the question of narcotic drugs every year, was perhaps underestimating the seriousness and extent of the problem. More specific measures should be taken to check the progress of that evil, which originated in countries having a certain social system and subsequently spread throughout the world. In point of fact, it was not the producers who were primarily to blame, but rather the social system itself.

16. The narcotics problem did not exist in all countries; in the socialist countries, for instance, there were isolated cases of drug addiction, but it was not really a social problem. All countries without exception should strive to eliminate that evil. It was gratifying therefore that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its special session had elaborated a draft Protocol; it was disappointing, however, that that text, which should be based only on humanitarian considerations, was in fact marred by political discrimination. Implementation of that Protocol was limited to certain countries only, since article 21 made it impossible for some sovereign States to become parties to the Protocol, whereas the participation of all countries should be sought in the effort to combat the social evil of the abuse of psychotropic substances. Moreover, article 23 was obviously of a neo-colonialist nature. It was at variance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and was for that reason unacceptable and unworthy of being included in the humanitarian document which the Protocol should consti-

tute. The proposed text also contained other flaws of a technical nature, and his delegation reserved the right to return to the question later, if necessary.

17. Those same drawbacks applied to the draft resolutions recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. There again, the only States referred to were those which were Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency or the International Court of Justice, so that the scope of the humanitarian struggle which should be waged against the evil of drug abuse was narrowed. His delegation therefore considered that the draft resolutions, as well as the draft Protocol, should be revised in order to enhance their effectiveness and moral authority.

18. His delegation reserved the right to intervene later in the discussion of the other technical documents which had been submitted to the Council.

19. The date and place of the conference of plenipotentiaries were technical questions whose solution depended on the manner in which the questions raised earlier were settled. Perhaps, indeed, it would be better not to hold a conference but to adopt other measures. It appeared that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had contemplated ten weeks for the duration of the conference; his delegation considered that three weeks, or perhaps four at the most, would be quite enough, since there remained only a few points on which the conference would have to reach agreement and since, with a certain amount of goodwill, the remaining administrative and technical questions could be solved rapidly. Henceforth, time should be devoted not to long statements but to specific action.

20. Mr. SEN (India) spoke of the evils of drug abuse, which were particularly evident in New York, and thanked the President of the International Narcotics Control Board and the Director of the Division of Narcotic Drugs for stressing the scope and urgency of the problem.

21. As the United States representative had said, the documents before the Council related to only one aspect of the question, and although they mentioned all the effects of drug abuse, they did not deal with the deep-rooted causes of the evil. It was quite obvious that it was the roots of the evil which should be attacked.

22. The draft Protocol provided an excellent basis on which to proceed, although some technical points, especially those which had been referred to by the representative of the USSR, warranted further study. For example, it could be asked how article 23 would apply to Rhodesia.

23. He considered that the scope and ramifications of the problem were insufficiently known and that Governments should be requested to give information on the measures taken at the national level. As to the conference of plenipotentiaries, its exact duration and cost were of little importance, given the seriousness of the problem. The only important consideration was that the conference should be a success.

24. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) supported the representative of the Soviet Union and felt that no political considerations should enter into the study of the problem of drug addiction. Consequently, the draft Protocol and the resolutions should be addressed to all States without exception.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.