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**Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

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**Round-table discussions of the ministerial segment**

**Action taken by subsidiary bodies of the Commission on  
Narcotic Drugs****Report of the Secretariat****Contributions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission  
on Narcotic Drugs to the ministerial segment of the forty-  
sixth session of the Commission****Addendum****Contents**

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\* E/CN.7/2003/1.



## **I. Introduction**

1. In its resolution 45/7, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs decided to convene a ministerial-level segment in April 2003 to assess the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered in meeting the goals and targets set out in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex).
2. In that resolution, the Commission called upon the participants of its ministerial-level segment to take account of the work of the regional meetings of heads of national drug law enforcement agencies, in particular initiatives that could further drug law enforcement cooperation.
3. In the light of that provision, an item on the ministerial segment of the Commission was included in the agendas of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission held in 2002. The contributions of the subsidiary bodies to the ministerial segment of the Commission are given below.

## **II. Contribution of the Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa**

4. The Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa held in Nairobi, from 9 to 13 September 2002, discussed various issues and decided that they should be brought to the attention of the ministerial segment of the Commission. The results of the discussion were summarized in the report of the Meeting<sup>1</sup> and are reproduced below:

“32. (a) The African Governments, at the highest level, had expressed their commitment to combat the drug menace, as reflected in the Organization of African Unity Declaration and Plan of Action on Drug Abuse Control and Illicit Drug Trafficking in Africa, in the Plan of Action on Drug Control in Africa, 2002-2006, adopted in Yamoussoukro, Côte d’Ivoire, on 11 May 2002 and in the report of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity on the Ministerial Conference on Drug Control in Africa;

“(b) The trafficking and abuse of cannabis remained the major concern for African countries, threatening the security, health and social fabric of society. Lenient policies in dealing with cannabis, such as individual initiatives to reclassify or declassify cannabis, were sending the wrong message and undermining the efforts of African Governments. While several African countries were devoting scarce resources to combating illicit drugs in transit, such as heroin and cocaine destined for Europe and North America, it was felt that African concerns with regard to the adverse impact of cannabis on African countries were not given the priority attention that they deserved. In that regard, the lenient policies adopted by some countries towards cannabis contributed to undermining and discouraging efforts to counter the drug problem;

“(c) Amphetamine-type stimulants were becoming a major concern, in particular in Southern Africa. The illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants should be given greater priority, and support

should be provided to efforts to create awareness of the problem and to combat the illicit manufacture of such stimulants.

“(d) As a demonstration of their political commitment, Governments should establish or strengthen drug law enforcement agencies in order to provide them with the financial and human resources necessary to wage a sustained and credible campaign against drug-trafficking organizations. Greater incentives should be provided to law enforcement officers;

“(e) Greater priority should be given to combating the illicit traffic in precursor chemicals in Africa and to implementing the provisions relating to precursor control contained in article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.<sup>2</sup> While there was concern about the extensive diversion of precursor chemicals to Africa, the information currently available on that trend was limited. Nigeria and South Africa were the two main countries with the infrastructure in place to collect data for the monitoring of precursor chemicals.”

### **III. Contribution of the thirty-seventh session of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East**

5. The Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, at its thirty-seventh session, decided to bring to the attention of the ministerial segment the following issues, as contained in its report:<sup>3</sup>

“23. The situation in Afghanistan, in particular the large-scale illicit cultivation of the opium poppy and the production and trafficking of opium and heroin, posed a major threat to the States members of the Subcommittee. Accordingly, the international community should give high priority to the elimination of illicit cultivation, in support of the clear determination of the Government of Afghanistan to achieve that goal as part of the reconstruction phase in the rural development sector. In addition, licit means of livelihood should be provided to farmers through sustained investment in alternative development programmes. Poverty eradication programmes should be accompanied by measures for effective law enforcement action against drug dealers and traffickers. Another important element was the establishment of efficient drug and crime control institutions at the national and provincial levels to ensure the rule of law and security throughout the country.

“24. Direct support to Afghanistan must be accompanied by improved regional and cross-border cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours, in particular the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the Central Asian States. Such cooperation was essential to counter drug trafficking and related organized criminal activities in the region. The UNDCP office in Afghanistan was called upon to play a proactive role in implementing, in consultation with Member States and the Afghan authorities, a strategy on drugs and crime, and in particular in supporting alternative development efforts targeting the long-term objective of eradicating illicit opium poppy cultivation.

“25. With regard to cannabis, the lenient policies adopted by some countries were considered to be contrary to the spirit and letter of the international drug control treaties, in particular the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961.<sup>4</sup> All parties to that Convention were called upon to fulfil their treaty obligations and to refrain from taking measures that would undermine its objectives.

“26. The States members of the Subcommission expressed their strong commitment to countering the drug problem and implementing the provisions of the international drug control treaties. Those treaties provided a framework for international cooperation. The States members of the Subcommission were opposed to initiatives to legalize or decriminalize cannabis, which was a major drug abuse in the countries of the region. Initiatives to depenalize the use of cannabis would send the wrong message and might initiate a process that would, in the long term, undermine international cooperation to combat all illicit drugs.

“27. All Member States should make a special effort to control precursors through the implementation of Operation Topaz and Operation Purple, the international tracking programmes for shipments of, respectively, acetic anhydride and potassium permanganate. Too large a quantity of acetic anhydride was still finding its way to traffickers and being used for the manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan.”

#### **IV. Contribution of the Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean**

6. The Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima from 15 to 18 October 2002, decided to bring to the attention of the ministerial-level segment the following issues, as contained in its report:<sup>5</sup>

“35. (a) *Synthetic drugs.* The trafficking and abuse of synthetic drugs, in particular methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA, commonly known as Ecstasy), was a growing problem in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Countering the illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of synthetic drugs should be given a higher priority. There was a need for greater support to study that trend and to promote greater international cooperation to counter it;

“(b) *New trafficking routes.* New trafficking routes were developing in the region, in addition to the traditional air routes. Of particular concern was the increasing maritime drug trafficking around Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, the Caribbean and the south of the continent. Greater cooperation among law enforcement authorities and international support for that cooperation were required to counter the growing threat;

“(c) *Demand reduction.* On the basis of the principle of shared responsibility, the countries producing illicit drugs and those consuming them should find complementary solutions to the problem of illicit drugs. Developed countries should continue to take action to control demand for

drugs among their own populations and provide further assistance for alternative development in producer countries. In that regard, the lenient policies in some countries towards the domestic consumption of drugs, in particular cannabis, undermined the efforts of other countries to reduce supply and could have a disruptive effect on efforts to overcome the world drug problem;

“(d) *Resources*. Law enforcement agencies in the region were suffering from a scarcity of resources to undertake their drug control activities. Additional resources were required to enable law enforcement authorities to meet the rapidly changing trends in drug trafficking in the region and greater coordinated action. Further commitment and support was needed at national and international levels for effective programmes on interdiction, the eradication of illicit crops and alternative development to be undertaken.”

## V. Contribution of the Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

7. The Twenty-sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific held in Bangkok from 11 to 15 November 2002, decided to bring to the attention of the ministerial segment the following issues, as contained in its report:<sup>6</sup>

“35. [...] It was important that in 2003 Member States should evaluate the achievements of the international community since the twentieth special session of the General Assembly based on a comprehensive, balanced and multidisciplinary approach and in terms of the principle of shared responsibility as provided for in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, devoted to countering the world drug problem together. It was agreed that considerable progress had been made in the Asian and Pacific region in implementing the goals and objectives of the twentieth special session, in particular in the areas of law enforcement and judicial cooperation, alternative development and drug demand reduction. However, there was a need for ministers to reiterate both their political and operational commitment to furthering these objectives so that greater progress could be made and a number of challenges could be overcome.

“36. (a) *Measures to promote judicial cooperation*. It was important that countries should take further action to establish and promote treaty relations, legislation and procedures to facilitate judicial cooperation between countries, especially in the areas of extradition, mutual legal assistance and measures to counter money-laundering. Differing legal and procedural requirements and an absence of treaty relations often inhibited full cooperation between countries. Since international criminal groups operated across national borders, Governments should take measures to ensure that law enforcement agencies could better cooperate to combat drug trafficking;

“(b) *Amphetamine-type stimulants*. The trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors was of great concern in the Asian and Pacific region because levels of trafficking and abuse were rising. Greater priority and support should be given by Governments to efforts to combat their illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse. Countries should ensure that adequate follow-up was given to regional initiatives and action plans addressing that problem;

“(c) *Heroin*. The manufacture, trafficking and abuse of heroin and the precursor chemicals used in its manufacture remained a major concern for countries in the region. Greater support was needed from the international community in assisting the efforts of law enforcement authorities in countering that problem;

“(d) *Alternative development*. Governments should continue to support alternative development projects in the region in order to reduce and eliminate illicit crops, for example through crop substitution and eradication measures;

“(e) *Resources*. There was a need for additional resources to build the operational capacities of law enforcement agencies to combat drug-related offences more effectively. In particular, law enforcement agencies needed to update their technical capabilities, for example through improved electronic surveillance and communications equipment, in order to keep pace with the increasing technical sophistication of drug-trafficking groups. The provision of such resources would demonstrate the political commitment of Governments to combating drug trafficking and abuse.”

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> UNDCP/HONLAF/2002/5, paras. 32 (a)-(e).

<sup>2</sup> *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

<sup>3</sup> UNDCP/SUBCOM/2002/5, paras. 23-27.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

<sup>5</sup> UNDCP/HONLAC/2002/5, paras. 35 (a)-(d).

<sup>6</sup> UNDCP/HONLAP/2002/5, paras. 35 and 36 (a)-(e).