



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 January 2008

Original: English

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Fifty-first session

Vienna, 10-14 March 2008

Items 5 (a) and 6 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Illicit drug traffic and supply: world situation with regard to drug trafficking and action taken by subsidiary bodies of the Commission

Implementation of the international drug control treaties:
follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

Action taken by subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Report of the Secretariat

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* E/CN.7/2008/1.



I. Introduction

1. Five meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs were held in 2007: the Seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Europe, held in Vienna from 19 to 22 June; the Seventeenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, held in Nairobi from 17 to 20 September; the Seventeenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito from 15 to 19 October; the Thirty-first Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok from 13 to 16 November; and the forty-second session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, held in Agra, India, from 3 to 7 December.

2. Following a review of trends in drug trafficking and regional and subregional cooperation, each of the subsidiary bodies addressed drug law enforcement issues of priority in its region. Consideration of those issues was facilitated by the discussions that had been held during informal meetings of the working groups established for that purpose. In addition, the implementation of previous recommendations was reviewed by each of the subsidiary bodies.

3. The recommendations of the subsidiary bodies at the above-mentioned meetings are reflected in section II below. The reports of those meetings UNODC/HONEURO/2007/5, UNODC/HONLAF/2007/5, UNODC/HONLAC/2007/5, UNODC/HONLAP/2007/5 and UNODC/SUBCOM/2007/5 will be made available to the Commission, upon request, in the working languages of the respective subsidiary bodies. The reports are also available on the website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

II. Recommendations of the subsidiary bodies

4. The recommendations below were transmitted by the subsidiary bodies for consideration and action by the Commission at its fifty-first session.

A. Seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe

1. Cocaine trafficking in Europe

5. The following recommendations were made by the Seventh Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, with regard to its issue entitled "Cocaine trafficking in Europe":

(a) Member States and UNODC should provide advice and support to ensure that systems are in place for the storage, security, analysis and disposal of seized drugs, particularly cocaine;

(b) With a view to tackling corruption in law enforcement agencies in a number of African States, Member States and UNODC should consider providing technical assistance for the development of integrity and anti-corruption programmes;

(c) Member States should recognize the importance of the role to be played by the newly established Maritime Analysis Operational Centre – Narcotics¹ in Lisbon and use it as a focal point for the exchange of intelligence and operational coordination;

(d) Member States should accurately report all significant seizures to UNODC and avoid double counting, especially of seizures made under joint international operations.

2. Transnational law enforcement investigation techniques

6. The following recommendations were made by the Seventh Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, with regard to its issue entitled “Transnational law enforcement investigation techniques”:

(a) Recognizing that law enforcement efforts to dismantle criminal networks involved in drug trafficking needed to be more effective and that comprehensive measures were required, Member States should consider the usefulness, in appropriate cases, of mounting international controlled delivery operations;

(b) Governments should re-examine their policies and procedures regarding controlled delivery to ensure that measures are in place in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988;²

(c) Member States that did not have legislation to facilitate controlled delivery operations were encouraged to introduce appropriate legislation and provide the necessary equipment, resources and trained staff to ensure that those operations could be carried out effectively;

(d) Member States should recognize the importance of confidential informants and undercover agents to the success of operations, especially operations involving controlled deliveries.

3. Criminal groups operating illicit drug trafficking networks within Europe

7. The following recommendations were made by the Seventh Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, with regard to its issue entitled “Criminal groups operating illicit drug trafficking networks within Europe”:

(a) To enable more effective international cooperation and coordination of operations, Member States were encouraged to establish a main law enforcement body for the fight against drug trafficking;

(b) In view of the links that existed between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime and emphasizing that drug trafficking should not be dealt with in isolation, consideration should be given to expanding the scope of future meetings of HONLEA to include broader organized crime issues, maintaining the focus however on trafficking in drugs and precursors;

¹ The Maritime Analysis Operational Centre – Narcotics is an informal intergovernmental task force set up to tackle maritime smuggling of drugs into Europe. It comprises seven European Union member States: France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

(c) Member States were encouraged to promote a multi-agency, intelligence-led approach in law enforcement, working with key partners in the private sector to counter organized crime more effectively;

(d) For the gathering of information, Member States might wish to consider programmes similar to the Crime Stoppers initiative.

4. Money-laundering

8. The following recommendations were made by the Seventh Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, with regard to its issue entitled “Money-laundering”:

(a) Law enforcement agencies should implement a policy of intercepting cash couriers and seizing their assets on the basis of risk profiles and other available information;

(b) Member States were urged to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism³ as part of an integrated approach to combating organized crime;

(c) Member States were urged to put in place systems to ensure timely and effective responses to requests for assistance in financial investigation cases, and in organized crime cases generally, and to make better use of existing international law enforcement organizations to the fullest extent of their potential;

(d) Consideration should be given to taking simultaneous action on all fronts, from the outset of major organized crime investigations, in order to uncover evidence and intelligence relating to drug trafficking and other serious crimes and to identify acquired assets held by organizations and individual criminals;

(e) Member States should explore the possibility of implementing prohibition measures to deter the involvement of professionals from the legal, commercial, financial and other sectors in the facilitation of illicit drug trafficking, the laundering of proceeds of illicit drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime;

(f) Financial intelligence contained in suspicious action reports, suspicious transaction reports and currency transaction reports should be exploited through proper analysis to support and better direct law enforcement operations.

B. Seventeenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa

1. The value and effectiveness of controlled delivery operations

9. The following recommendations were made by the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, with regard to its issue entitled “The value and effectiveness of controlled delivery operations”:

(a) In recognition of the value of controlled delivery operations to law enforcement agencies investigating and dismantling organized criminal groups,

³ Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Treaty Series*, No. 198.

Governments should be requested to ensure that legislation is put in place and to make appropriate resources available to enhance the effectiveness of controlled delivery operations;

(b) Appropriate professional and integrity standards should be introduced together with standard operational procedures for controlled delivery operations;

(c) The participation of law enforcement agencies from primary source and destination countries in the meetings of HONLEA, Africa, should be promoted in order to facilitate and strengthen information exchange and direct operational cooperation;

(d) The proposal for the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) of UNODC should be implemented at selected airports, subject to the availability of funds from donors.

2. Mobilizing community support for drug law enforcement strategies

10. The following recommendations were made by the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, with regard to its issue entitled “Mobilizing community support for drug law enforcement strategies”:

(a) Regional, provincial and local alliances involving law enforcement agencies, the private sector, the media and other sectors of civil society should be developed to tackle drug demand and supply;

(b) The promotion of the concept of community policing should be considered as part of overall efforts to build public confidence and trust in the police;

(c) Governments should be encouraged to lend their full political support to measures aimed at effectively implementing national drug control strategies and, where appropriate, at establishing national coordinating bodies.

3. Inter-agency cooperation: a unified response to combating illicit drug trafficking

11. The following recommendations were made by the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, with regard to its issue entitled “Inter-agency cooperation”:

(a) Inter-agency national law enforcement coordination units should be established and be operational 24 hours a day to facilitate information exchange and cooperation;

(b) The use of formal memorandums of understanding should be promoted to facilitate inter-agency and broader international cooperation;

(c) National plans of action should be established and supported by adequate financial and other resources to ensure their effective implementation;

(d) Governments should be encouraged to review existing legislation so as to allow for the effective investigation and punishment of offenders and, where necessary, Governments should take steps to strengthen such legislation;

(e) In delivering training assistance, UNODC should promote more widely the train-the-trainer approach.

4. The role of forensic laboratories: specific scientific support to Africa

12. The following recommendations were made by the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, with regard to its issue entitled “The role of forensic laboratories”:

(a) Member States in Africa should ensure that sustainable, well equipped and resourced laboratories to assist law enforcement authorities are in place;

(b) UNODC should prepare updated manuals and guidance materials for Member States regarding the minimum requirements for establishing basic laboratory services;

(c) UNODC should continue to support the analytical work of laboratories by providing technical assistance, including through the training of staff and the supply of kits for testing drugs and precursors in the field, subject to the availability of resources. UNODC should also continue to provide advice on best practices and encourage the use of advisory manuals;

(d) Professionally qualified experts already working in laboratories in Africa should be encouraged to deliver specialized training;

(e) Governments should be encouraged to ensure that suitably qualified forensic staff are available to give expert evidence in court proceedings and that the legal framework allows such evidence to be admitted;

(f) Law enforcement agencies should adopt standard operational procedures to ensure that seized drugs and other evidence are not improperly handled and are securely stored.

C. Seventeenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Cannabis plant cultivation and trafficking in cannabis in Latin America and the Caribbean

13. The following recommendations were made by the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, with regard to its issue entitled “Cannabis plant cultivation and trafficking in cannabis in Latin America and the Caribbean”:

(a) Governments should be encouraged to assess the threat posed by cannabis in order to support the development of effective national strategies to counter the abuse of and trafficking in cannabis and the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants;

(b) Governments should be encouraged to develop national strategies to counter the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants, including eradication programmes that effectively discourage the illicit cultivation of such plants and offer viable alternatives, where appropriate, to rural communities that are dependent on income obtained from such cultivation;

(c) Governments should remain determined and proactive in the development and promotion of drug abuse prevention and awareness-raising

campaigns that inform the public about the true dangers to public health and security associated with the cultivation of cannabis plants and with cannabis abuse and trafficking.

2. Money-laundering and related criminal activities in Latin America and the Caribbean

14. The following recommendations were made by the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, with regard to its issue entitled “Money-laundering and related criminal activities in Latin America and the Caribbean”:

(a) Governments that have not already done so should fully implement their national legislation against money-laundering and take steps to ensure that their laws cover all serious forms of crime;

(b) Governments should be encouraged to set up financial intelligence units and other types of intelligence units, taking the necessary steps to ensure that those units are properly resourced and equipped to carry out their functions;

(c) Governments should be encouraged to introduce strong and robust laws to regulate the matter of termination of ownership, where appropriate and in accordance with their national constitutional principles, and to regulate the administration of seized assets and funds derived from drug trafficking and other serious forms of crime.

3. Trafficking in and commercialization of amphetamine-type stimulants

15. The following recommendations were made by the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, with regard to its issue entitled “Trafficking in and commercialization of amphetamine-type stimulants”:

(a) Governments that have not already done so should ensure that their law enforcement officers receive adequate training in raising public awareness about the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of synthetic drugs and the diversion of precursor chemicals used to manufacture synthetic drugs and in identifying such drugs and their precursors;

(b) Governments and regional and international organizations with experience in countering the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of synthetic drugs and the diversion of the precursor chemicals used to manufacture those drugs should be encouraged to share their expertise with countries in the region that are beginning to be affected by the trafficking in those substances;

(c) Governments should encourage their law enforcement agencies to develop close working relationships with the chemical industries operating within their jurisdiction and, by so doing, to exchange information on legitimate commercial needs for precursor chemicals, unusual trends and suspicious transactions;

(d) Governments should take steps to ensure that law enforcement authorities investigating illicit drug offences are aware of the rapidly developing technologies available to trafficking syndicates for communication and data exchange; that the authorities are familiar with the means for obtaining intelligence

and evidence and that they have the necessary resources and legislative support to carry out those tasks;

(e) Governments should endeavour to implement Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 49/3, entitled “Strengthening systems for the control of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of synthetic drugs”, by cooperating with the International Narcotics Control Board and sharing information on the movement, transit and sale of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants.

Other recommendations of the Seventeenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

16. At the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, it was suggested that the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, should consider ways and means of enhancing cooperation, coordination and the exchange of information in real time, and of promoting mutual legal assistance among the national drug law enforcement authorities of countries in the region. It was recommended that the Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, should consider the establishment of a joint regional information and coordination centre, which could be established in a country in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and benefit from the participation of other countries in the region. It was indicated that the Government of Ecuador would be willing to host such a centre and that it had drafted a proposal for discussion. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expressed support for the proposal.

D. Thirty-first Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

1. The response at the regional level to heroin trafficking

17. The following recommendations were made by the Thirty-first Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, with regard to its issue entitled “The response at the regional level to heroin trafficking”:

(a) To meet the growing challenge to the region of Asia and the Pacific posed by the well-organized activities of syndicates such as West African and Asian criminal groups, Governments must ensure that their law enforcement authorities are knowledgeable about the structures and modus operandi of such groups and that they are capable of responding effectively to their illegal activities;

(b) Governments should take steps to ensure that their legislative and procedural controls over the manufacture, sale and international movement of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs are capable of countering the changing tactics of traffickers seeking to divert internationally controlled chemicals and non-controlled chemical substitutes;

(c) Governments should encourage their drug law enforcement agencies to establish the necessary inter-agency cooperation mechanisms to enable them to respond quickly to requests to undertake controlled delivery operations;

(d) Governments should encourage their drug law enforcement agencies to develop and disseminate widely procedures that enable them, with the appropriate training, to respond to requests to undertake controlled delivery operations.

2. The growing significance of the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in the region

18. The following recommendations were made by the Thirty-first Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, with regard to its issue entitled “The growing significance of the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants in the region”:

(a) Where they have not already done so, Governments should be encouraged to develop, within their law enforcement authorities, the expertise and skills needed to guide the safe dismantling of clandestine laboratories and the disposal of chemicals and toxic by-products associated with such manufacture;

(b) Governments should be encouraged to introduce measures such as impurity profiling of seized amphetamine-type stimulants and to make the findings of their analyses available throughout the region, so as to support the efforts of drug law enforcement authorities to identify the sources of amphetamine-type stimulants manufactured in the region and the trafficking routes used;

(c) Governments of countries in the region should be encouraged to exchange data on amphetamine-type stimulants and to participate in data collection mechanisms such as the Drug Abuse Information Network for Asia and the Pacific so that they can clearly understand the connections between the trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and so that they can better respond to those problems by developing effective strategies and countermeasures.

3. Inter-agency cooperation: a unified response to combating drug trafficking

19. The following recommendations were made by the Thirty-first Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, with regard to its issue entitled “The issue on inter-agency cooperation: a unified response to combating drug trafficking”:

(a) In order to maintain border security, even as trade and transport services expand across the region, Governments should ensure that law enforcement authorities are involved in the planning of future border management procedures;

(b) Where they have not already done so, Governments should take steps to ensure that inter-agency cooperation is supported as an integral part of the national strategy to combat drug trafficking;

(c) Governments in the region should ensure that training for key agencies responsible for drug law enforcement, including police, customs, anti-narcotics forces, prosecutors and the judiciary, is coordinated and integrated, as appropriate, in order to foster mutual understanding of the requirements and operational needs of the various services.

E. Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East at its forty-second session

1. Cannabis plant cultivation and cannabis trafficking in the region of the Subcommittee

20. The following recommendations were made by the Subcommittee with regard to its issue entitled “Cannabis cultivation and trafficking in the region of the Subcommittee”:

(a) Governments should be encouraged to carry out authoritative surveys of the extent of cannabis plant cultivation within their territories;

(b) Governments should develop strategies against cannabis production that discourage the illicit cultivation of cannabis plants and that offer viable alternatives to rural communities whose income depends upon such cultivation and should support demand reduction and awareness campaigns similar to those developed for other drugs of abuse;

(c) In response to the growing sophistication of the modus operandi employed in smuggling cannabis, the increasing financial returns and the large volume of consignments trafficked, Governments must support the efforts of their law enforcement authorities to develop close operational ties with the counterparts in other countries in the exchange of information, the provision of operational support and the undertaking of controlled delivery operations.

2. Law enforcement strategies to mobilize community support for drug demand reduction

21. The following recommendations were made by the Subcommittee with regard to its issue entitled “Law enforcement strategies to mobilize community support for drug demand reduction”:

(a) Governments should support their drug law enforcement authorities in building their capacity to develop effective strategies and programmes aimed at reducing the demand for illicit drugs;

(b) In meeting their responsibilities with regard to implementing effective national demand reduction strategies, Governments must ensure that adequate resources are allocated to support programmes for raising public awareness, community-based prevention and treatment and rehabilitation;

(c) Governments should encourage their drug law enforcement agencies to develop partnerships with other relevant Government agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations, in order to implement comprehensive demand reduction strategies.

3. Trafficking in opiates, precursor control and the increased need for international cooperation

22. The following recommendations were made by the Subcommittee with regard to its issue entitled “Opiate trafficking, precursor control and the increased need for international cooperation”:

(a) In order to determine whether sufficient information exists to justify the inclusion of acetic acid in the tables of the 1988 Convention, Governments should ensure that the recommendations contained in the limited international special surveillance list of non-scheduled substances are implemented. Implementation of the recommendations would make it possible to gather information on the possible diversion and misuse of acetic acid;

(b) To ensure standardization in international practices, the International Narcotics Control Board should be invited to convene an international workshop to review the pre-export notification system, in particular information exchange mechanisms and procedures;

(c) Governments are urged to support international law enforcement initiatives that focus on both drugs and precursors, including operations Channel and Targeted Anti-trafficking Regional Communication, Expertise and Training (TARCET), targeting such trafficking along the borders of Afghanistan by providing resources, equipment and technology.

III. Follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

23. Participants at the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Thirty-first Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, and the forty-second session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East discussed the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

24. Representatives of the Secretariat briefed participants at the meetings on preparations for the 10-year review by Member States to take place at the fifty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and on progress made by Member States in implementing the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the Assembly. A number of recommendations on the follow-up to the twentieth special session were formulated so that they could be brought to the attention of the Commission at its fifty-first session.

25. More specifically, at the Thirty-first Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, one representative noted that at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, in 1998, Governments had adopted the Political Declaration (Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex), measures to strengthen international cooperation to address the world drug problem and the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction (Assembly resolution S-20/3, annex). Those documents formed the general framework for drug control worldwide and played a unique role in coordinating the efforts of Member States to achieve the goals set at the twentieth special session. Since 2008 had been established as a target date for achieving significant progress in relation to the goals set at the twentieth special session, it was suggested that the international community should consider the following proposals:

(a) Since opium poppy cultivation in the Golden Triangle had been reduced, the international community should continue to provide the necessary funds and

technologies to make the region of Asia and the Pacific free of opium poppy cultivation as soon as possible;

(b) As a result of the efforts made by Governments in the region, the increase in the number of heroin abusers seemed to have levelled off, but the rate of abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants was continuing to increase rapidly. Accordingly, the international community should immediately adopt measures to maintain the reduced demand for heroin and to contain the rapid increase in the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants;

(c) While the drug law enforcement capacity in the region had been enhanced, illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking operations had become increasingly sophisticated and difficult to detect, posing new challenges that required drug law enforcement agencies to exchange information in real time, summarize and share (where appropriate) successful experiences and best practices, and jointly develop innovative international cooperation mechanisms that improved the effectiveness of drug law enforcement initiatives between countries.

IV. Organization of future meetings of the subsidiary bodies

26. At the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, the representative of Côte d'Ivoire informed the Meeting participants that his Government had offered to host the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, in 2008. The representative of Burundi informed the participants of his Government's offer to host the Nineteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, in Bujumbura in 2009.

27. At the Seventeenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, the representative of Honduras informed the participants of the offer by her Government to host the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2008.
