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**Illicit drug traffic and supply and related measures:
international cooperation on eradicating the illicit
cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic
drugs and psychotropic substances and on alternative
development**

**Promoting best practices and lessons learned for the
sustainability and integrity of alternative development
programmes**

Report of the Executive Director**

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/6 to report on its implementation by Member States and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The report details the technical assistance provided by Member States and UNODC in support of alternative development as a tool to address illicit crop cultivation. The report also provides a summary of the current global situation of illicit crop cultivation, highlights the exchange of best practices and lessons learned at the regional and interregional levels, discusses alternative development as a key component of policies and programmes for reducing illicit crop cultivation and highlights efforts undertaken by Member States to strengthen technical assistance and cooperation. It also presents recommendations on further strengthening alternative development as a drug control tool so that the challenges posed by illicit crop cultivation can be adequately addressed.

* E/CN.7/2010/1.

** The submission of the present report was delayed owing to the need to wait for further information from Member States.



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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-second session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted resolution 52/6, entitled “Promoting best practices and lessons learned for the sustainability and integrality of alternative development programmes”. In that resolution the Commission recognized the role played by developing countries with extensive expertise in alternative development and preventive alternative development and the importance of promoting a set of best practices and lessons learned in those areas and of sharing them with States affected by or facing the risk of illicit cultivation of drug crops. The Commission also urged Governments to increase and sustain their support for integrated and sustainable alternative development programmes and, where appropriate, preventive alternative development programmes, and to strengthen cross-border bilateral, subregional and regional technical assistance and cooperation, including South-South cooperation. It called upon Member States, consistent with their national and international obligations, and relevant international organizations to consider measures enabling the products of the above-mentioned programmes to have easier access to markets, taking into account applicable multilateral trade rules. A note verbale was sent to the Member States on 14 September 2009, inviting them to submit information to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) by 15 October 2009 on their efforts to implement the resolution. The information received by 30 November 2009 from China, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Mexico and Panama is reflected in the present report.

II. Global overview of illicit crop cultivation

2. In 2009, global opium poppy cultivation decreased by 16 per cent from the 2008 level, or by 30 per cent from the 2007 level. Global opium production decreased from 8,800 metric tons in 2007 to 8,000 metric tons in 2008. Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan decreased by 19 per cent in 2008. Twenty out of 34 Afghan provinces are currently opium-free. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, owing to forced eradication, the area under opium poppy cultivation decreased from 26,800 hectares in 1998 to only 1,600 hectares in 2008, which represents a reduction of 94 per cent. From 2008 to 2009, an increase of 300 hectares, or 19 per cent, was noted. In Myanmar, cultivation increased for the third subsequent year, from 28,500 hectares in 2008 to 31,700 hectares in 2009, an increase of 11 per cent.

3. In 2008, the total area under coca cultivation decreased by 8 per cent. Colombia reported a major decline in coca bush cultivation, from 99,000 hectares in 2007 to 81,000 hectares in 2008, whereas in Peru and Bolivia increases of 6 and 4.5 per cent, respectively, were noted. Much of the decline in Colombia was due to the manual eradication of 96,115 hectares of coca bush (44 per cent more than was eradicated manually in 2007) and the spraying of 133,496 hectares of coca bush in 2008. Production decreased in Colombia and increased in Bolivia and Peru: in Colombia 430 metric tons were produced in 2008, compared to 600 in 2007, whereas in Bolivia 104 metric tons of cocaine were produced in 2007 and 113 in 2008. Peru reported 290 metric tons of cocaine production in 2007 and 302 metric tons in 2008. Estimated global cocaine production decreased by

15 per cent, from 994 metric tons in 2007 to 845 metric tons in 2008. The 2008 coca survey in Ecuador indicated that no significant coca cultivation existed in the country, confirming the results of the 2006 survey.

III. Alternative development as a key component of policies and programmes for reducing illicit drug production

4. In 2009, UNODC continued to advocate the need for increased alternative development assistance to affected Member States and continued the implementation of its field activities in Afghanistan, Bolivia, Colombia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Peru.

5. In March 2009, Member States reiterated the importance of alternative development as a strategy to reduce the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In 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 at the high-level segment of its fifty-second session,¹ and subsequently adopted by the General Assembly,² alternative development is recognized as a strategy to achieve sustainable eradication of illicit crops and contribute to social and economic development and poverty eradication.

6. Following the recommendations of part II.D of the Plan of Action, "International cooperation on eradicating the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and on alternative development," UNODC has incorporated in its projects elements to measure the impact of alternative development interventions through human development indicators, in addition to the traditional illicit crop estimates. Many of the ongoing projects implemented by UNODC have collected baseline data against which the impact of specific development actions could be gauged. All new projects implemented by UNODC will establish this type of information prior to project initiation.

7. In its response, Colombia underlined the important role played by UNODC in initiating, implementing and co-financing projects in the field of alternative development, while emphasizing the importance of related interventions on the environment, the social structure and the economy. The Government of China stressed the importance of alternative development, as it contributes to the reduction of opium poppy cultivation outside its national borders.

8. Egypt reported that it participated actively in the various international and regional efforts to reduce the drug problem and had acceded to the various relevant international conventions, such as the International Opium Convention signed at The Hague on 23 January 1912,³ the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961,⁴ the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971⁵ and the United Nations

¹ A/64/92-E/2009/98, sect. II.A.

² Resolution 64/182.

³ League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. VIII, No. 222.

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

⁵ Ibid., vol. 1019, No. 14956.

Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.⁶ Egypt reported that it had been implementing article 14, paragraph 3, of the latter Convention, which states, “the Parties may cooperate to increase the effectiveness of eradication efforts. Such cooperation may ... include support, when appropriate, for integrated rural development leading to economically viable alternatives to illicit cultivation”. Such alternatives can be enhanced if the authorities clearly stress that the cultivation of illicit drug crops is a serious crime.

IV. Promoting best practices and lessons learned

9. Leveraging past experiences and sharing approaches and results have been important ways of promoting the development and implementation of alternative development strategies. In July 2009, UNODC, with the support of and in association with the Government of Germany, sponsored a seminar in Peru and a visit to coca fields and farming villages in its Upper Huallaga Valley, where alternative development projects are under way. A total of 17 participants from China, Colombia, Ecuador, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand took part in the visit, which focused on both policy and technical aspects of alternative development. The technical components covered issues such as marketing, gender inclusion, value added, integrated pest management, environmentally friendly inputs, agriculture, processing and small-farmer-led business enterprise development. Participants also had the chance to meet with different farmer-based organizations and learn first-hand the limitations faced and approaches taken in Peru, as well as to visit sites where specialty coffees, cacao, palm hearts and palm oil are grown or produced.

10. Mexico reported that its alternative development interventions were based on a holistic rural and social sustainable development strategy, the aims of which include licit development of areas where illicit crops are cultivated. Relevant interventions are carried out under the National Programme for Drug Control, established in 1995, which is still valid and is embedded in the National Development Plan that is effective from 2007 to 2012. Sustainable development programmes have been implemented in 75 per cent of the area under illicit drug-crop cultivation. These programmes operate in the framework of the National Development and Drug Control Office and are aimed at implementing economic activities for rural communities to facilitate poverty reduction, the conservation of natural resources and the protection of endangered species and biodiversity. The main objective is the improvement of the overall quality of life in these areas. The remaining 25 per cent of areas are those where access is the most difficult; interventions there are limited to control and institutional presence.

11. Three entities, the Secretariat of Social Development, the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fishery and Nutrition and the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, are in charge of relevant activities. The Secretariat of Social Development has carried out evaluations on a regular basis and found that the efforts undertaken so far in the prevention of illicit cultivation are not sufficient to deter the rural population from engaging in the cultivation of illicit drug crops. In this context, best practices and lessons learned

⁶ Ibid., vol. 1582, No. 27627.

from the wide range of national development interventions are utilized in development actions in areas of illicit crop cultivation.

12. In December 2009, Thailand formally offered to host the international conference on alternative development for promoting best practices and lessons learned, as called for in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/6. The conference will be held in Thailand in 2010, and the agenda will comprise both a policy forum and field visits.

V. Strengthening technical assistance and cooperation

13. Colombia reported that its alternative development interventions were conducted within the framework of international cooperation strategies for 2007-2010. Technical cooperation is a major focus of its South-South cooperation, in particular with Chile and Costa Rica, with a focus on improving the productive capacity of families involved in alternative development projects. In the fields of commercialization and marketing of alternative development products, Thailand is an important partner. In relation to regional cooperation, multilateral agreements have been established as a mechanism to strengthen the cooperation and exchange of information between countries of the region.

14. China reported that it had signed bilateral cooperation agreements on drug control with the countries in the Golden Triangle region, including the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand. The Governments of China and Myanmar reached a preliminary agreement in June 2009 to jointly develop their programme for licit cultivation to replace poppy cultivation. It was reported that cooperation with the Lao People's Democratic Republic had been moving ahead and that in July 2009 the National Narcotics Control Commission of China had sent representatives to the seminar in Peru on South-South cooperation for alternative development, organized by UNODC. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms for drug control have been set up with concerned countries. A working group involving the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Finance, the Commission of Reform and Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Administration of Customs has been established and is coordinated by the National Narcotics Control Commission, having as its objective the monitoring of alternative development interventions. Related offices have actively promoted alternative development, especially in areas bordering the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. In order to strengthen the planning of its cross-border alternative development in the north of Myanmar, in June 2009 China set up a working group for planning and an expert group to address opium poppy cultivation outside its borders.

15. Egypt emphasized the importance of supporting efforts for alternative development in its traditional and comprehensive aspect. It reported giving considerable attention to development projects in the areas of Upper Egypt and Sinai, establishing projects in the fields of agricultural, industrial, social and tourism development, improving education and supporting security efforts. The Egyptian efforts continued to cover the alternative development approach as a basis for supporting efforts to eradicate illicit cultivation.

VI. Access to markets for products from alternative development programmes

16. The Colombian Government reported that it had undertaken various actions to facilitate access for alternative development products to national and international markets. Information on organizations and households involved in alternative development programmes was updated, as well as a website promoting eco-tourism projects in the regions of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, San José del Guaviare and Urabe Antioqueño and Chocoano. Strategic alliances with the private sector and assistance to producers in obtaining new distribution and marketing channels have been undertaken. In collaboration with Éxito, a nationwide department store, negotiations are under way to support eight fishermen's organizations by providing them with training in areas such as good food-handling practices, hygiene, fishing and commercialization of their products. These organizations will, in turn, enjoy commercialization and distribution advantages over traditional suppliers. In cooperation with the Corona foundation, 20,000 artisans are expected to be involved in the production and launching of four lines of tableware in 2010. In collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Government of Colombia is working on strategies to continue supporting the commercialization of alternative development products through processes to improve quality and production.

17. China reported that in 2009 the Central Government and the government of Yunnan province had provided 50 million and 14 million yuan, respectively, for cooperation on alternative development between China and Myanmar and between China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, supporting enterprises in developing the cultivation of alternative crops and alternative industries. The funding has been used mainly to improve the quality of alternative development products, to improve infrastructure, to provide technical training and to promote the exchange of best practices. In addition, the Government of China has waived tariffs and import VAT for 921,400 tons of alternative products such as sugar cane, corn, rubber, bananas and rice from the north of Myanmar and the Laos People's Democratic Republic. This measure has encouraged poppy cultivators in the north of Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic to move on to sustainable and legal economic growth through alternative development.

18. Ecuador reported that it had focused its work on preventive alternative development interventions within the framework of a State policy, the Plan Ecuador, which considers human security a result of integrated and sustainable development. Food security, economic safety and community participation for rural populations are the main areas of intervention, with the aim of preventing vulnerable populations from taking part in illicit activities. Three preventive alternative development interventions are currently being implemented. In one, 14,000 fishermen benefit from services such as the provision of microcredit, infrastructure and equipment. In another, the local population is socio-economically involved in development projects, including eco-tourism activities, the making of handicrafts, the sustainable management of agro-forest systems and the protection of water sources. The third is aimed at the development of a value chain for basic cacao products such as liqueurs and chocolate bars. The main objective of this five-year programme being carried out in three provinces, is the economic and social inclusion of 2 million hectares and of 308,827 inhabitants, reactivating production

and generating work. Five centres for socio-economic development have been created, including infrastructure and equipment for cacao processing. Interventions have taken place on an area of 400,000 hectares, involving 77,206 people directly, or 25 per cent of the population in that area, and 158,000 indirectly, among them many members of indigenous groups.

19. In Peru, the success of UNODC work became apparent from the sales numbers of the cooperative enterprises established and supported by UNODC, which generated more than \$90 million in exports in 2009, benefiting grass-roots farmers' families and communities. These cooperative enterprises were initiated and supported by UNODC, and most of them are now operating independently under the management of former coca-cultivating farmers.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

20. The impact of development-oriented drug control interventions should not be measured solely by illicit crop estimates, but rather in combination with human development indicators and other specific indicators designed to be compared against baseline data of targeted villages and/or populations.

21. Although affected Member States are increasingly allocating resources from national budgets to support alternative development programmes, additional efforts should be made to increase both economic and social support so that programmes are given ample opportunity to take hold, create an impact and be sustainable.

22. Member States, UNODC, the international community and in particular the international financial institutions should strive to increase human, political and economic resources to broaden the coverage of alternative development programmes, given that on average anywhere between 15 and 23 per cent of households that require alternative development assistance receive support.

23. Strategies for further action should ensure that the vast amounts of knowledge and experience, best practices and lessons learned compiled over the last 25 years of alternative development programmes by UNODC, Member States and the international community are shared and disseminated.

24. Over the past few years, actions to address the need to incorporate alternative development approaches into broader national development strategies appear to have increased. However, despite some improvements, much more needs to be done so that national drug control agencies and institutions do not bear the full responsibility of financing, designing and executing alternative development programmes. In this regard, national line ministries and the international financial institutions should mainstream development-oriented drug control programmes into their broader strategies. Failing this, alternative development will remain sectoral and unable to provide broad coverage and will not be in a position to leverage the specific expertise of relevant agencies.

25. There continue to be bottlenecks in providing market access for products from alternative development programmes, although there has been a clear increase in marketing success on the part of some programmes. Against this background, Member States, the international community, UNODC and the private sector are encouraged to seek ways to identify and open markets and to share the necessary

technical expertise to improve product development and enhance value added, in support of association of small farmers.

26. Although intraregional cooperation appears to have had some success in the recent past, there have been relatively few technical cooperative exchanges between Member States in the context of South-South cooperation. Member States, UNODC, international agencies and civil society organizations should increase efforts to assist affected States in exploring innovative ways to work together, share best practices, co-sponsor research and formulate policy approaches in line with the relevant international conventions.
