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**Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug
Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa**
Cairo, 30 May-3 June 2004

Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, held in Cairo from 30 May to 3 June 2004

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* The present report is being issued in Arabic, English and French, the working languages of the subsidiary body.



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I. Matters calling for action by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or brought to its attention

Recommendations adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa

1. The Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Africa, adopted the recommendations set forth below, which had been drawn up by its working groups. For the observations and conclusions of the working groups that led to the recommendations, see chapter IV below.

Issue 1. Drug trafficking, conflict and violence: the challenge to law enforcement in conflict and post-conflict situations

2. The following recommendations were made with regard to drug trafficking, conflict and violence: the challenge to law enforcement in conflict and post-conflict situations:

(a) Countries emerging from conflict should adopt a drug control strategy as part of their reconstruction efforts and draw upon the experiences of countries in the African region, such as Sierra Leone;

(b) The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime should consider specific strategies to assist countries emerging from conflict in their drug control and related crime prevention efforts, pursuant to the draft resolution entitled “Drug control and related crime prevention assistance for countries emerging from conflict”, recommended by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-seventh session for adoption by the Economic and Social Council;

(c) Countries emerging from conflict should be called upon to pay particular attention to the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children, particularly child soldiers, who have often been the victims of drug abuse and conflict;

(d) Governments of countries emerging from conflict should make use of the training facilities available to African countries, such as the facilities of the Anti-Narcotics General Administration of Egypt, in establishing their drug control authorities; the international community should support the provision of training to law enforcement agencies of countries emerging from conflict.

Issue 2. Emerging trafficking challenges

3. With regard to emerging trafficking challenges, the following recommendations were made:

(a) To prevent the abuse of illicit drugs, Governments should take steps to ensure effective controls over the manufacture, sale and distribution of licit pharmaceutical medicines;

(b) Even though the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants is not widespread in Africa, Governments of countries in the region should nevertheless take steps to ensure that they have in place effective regulatory controls for precursor chemicals essential to the manufacture of such stimulants and that such controls are well coordinated with a law enforcement response;

(c) Governments should encourage the establishment, among their drug law enforcement authorities, of agency focal points responsible for coordinating and facilitating the exchange of operational information between services and supporting requests in matters relating to current investigations.

Issue 3. Cannabis: the African connection

4. The following recommendations were made: with regard to cannabis: the African connection:

(a) Governments should call on the African Union to give greater priority to the control of cannabis in Africa and to develop a common strategy to combat illicit cannabis cultivation, production, trafficking and abuse;

(b) The Drug Control and Crime Prevention Unit of the African Union should, in collaboration with subregional organizations in Africa, step up its advocacy role among African heads of State and Government to strengthen political will and ensure resource allocation for drug control on the continent, particularly with regard to cannabis;

(c) Governments, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, should contribute to the establishment of regional laboratories to develop supervised scientific research into cannabis, its properties, chemical profiling and testing, and possible medical applications;

(d) Governments should develop a multifaceted strategy for control over the production of, trafficking in and abuse of cannabis, with particular emphasis on support for rural areas at risk to illicit cannabis cultivation.

II. Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in countering drug trafficking

5. At its 1st meeting, on 30 May 2004, the Meeting considered agenda item 3, entitled "Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in countering drug trafficking". During his introduction of the item, the representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime made a presentation. The representative of Egypt made two presentations: one on the operations undertaken by the Anti-Narcotics General Administration of Egypt and the other on the training facilities that it offered. Statements were made by the representatives of Zambia, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Senegal, Swaziland, Uganda, the Sudan, Togo, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania, Guinea, South Africa, the Gambia, Chad, Kenya, Mauritius and Burkina Faso. A statement was also made by the observer for the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences.

6. It was noted that the drug problem remained one of the obstacles to sustainable development in the African region. Prevalent drug trafficking and abuse posed a threat to States in the region, particularly to the social fabric of those States and to the health of their citizens. The proceeds of drug trafficking had provided criminal groups with the means to corrupt and influence and, in some cases, to undermine the legitimate economy. Drug trafficking was in many cases linked with trafficking in firearms and other illicit commodities. The drug problem was a particular challenge to Governments engaged in post-conflict reconstruction and those Governments had

to ensure that addressing the problem would be part of their reconstruction efforts. The Meeting was informed of various routes and modi operandi used by drug traffickers. There was increased drug trafficking by sea, especially in West Africa. It was indicated that, as a result of effective law enforcement measures to combat drug trafficking by sea off the coast of Portugal and Spain, traffickers have moved their mother-ship operations to the West African coast, where the capacity for maritime interdiction and law enforcement was weaker.

7. Abuse of and trafficking in cannabis constituted the major drug problems facing countries in Africa. Governments of countries in the region were investing significant resources to deal with those problems. It was noted that in some countries cannabis was increasingly becoming the preferred cash crop, replacing essential food crops such as maize and wheat. Resources available to tackle the illicit cultivation of cannabis and support farmers were coming essentially from the African countries themselves. The adoption of lenient policies in some countries would increase the threat posed to African countries by trafficking in and abuse of cannabis. The Meeting was informed that some law enforcement agencies in Western Europe were not supporting controlled delivery operations when cannabis was involved. The Meeting considered that controlled deliveries should be supported for all substances under international control.

8. Several speakers referred to the extensive eradication programmes initiated by their Governments. While those had resulted in the eradication of cannabis plants, in many cases no alternative crops had been offered to farmers, as was the case with alternative development programmes that followed the eradication of opium poppy and coca bush. In Ghana, cassava had been introduced as an alternative to cannabis. Several speakers expressed regret that so far there had been little funding available from multilateral agencies and donors to reduce the cultivation of cannabis, including through alternative development programmes.

9. The Meeting was informed that the Government of Morocco and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime had completed a first survey of cannabis cultivation. The Office was called upon to develop the methodology for the cannabis survey in order to assist countries in Africa in assessing the extent of cannabis cultivation in the region. Large-scale cultivation of cannabis had been detected in national parks, for example, in the Sudan.

10. While cannabis remained the main drug problem in Africa, trafficking in and abuse of cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants were on the rise in several countries in the region. Several representatives referred to increased seizures of cocaine; for example, there had been a notable seizure of 558 kg of cocaine in Ghana, which had been smuggled as part of a mother-ship operation. There was increased abuse of khat, particularly in some countries in Southern Africa. Some representatives referred to increased seizures of chemical precursors used in the manufacture of illicit drugs, in particular synthetic drugs, particularly in Southern Africa, where traffickers had established laboratories in residential areas to manufacture synthetic drugs. Several laboratories had been dismantled, above all in South Africa. Training of personnel of law enforcement agencies was essential to raising the awareness and knowledge of the types of chemicals at risk of being diverted and the modus operandi used in diverting such chemicals. Such training was particularly important for port and airport authorities.

11. It was noted that drug abuse remained a major health problem in African countries, posing an additional burden to social and medical services and contributing to the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. In post-conflict situations, treatment and rehabilitation programmes were needed, especially for child soldiers and youth involved in civil war. In several countries in Africa initiatives had been taken to raise awareness regarding the dangers of drug abuse, in particular among young people. Several representatives indicated that their Governments were pursuing a balanced approach whereby drug demand reduction activities were being undertaken together with efforts to combat drug trafficking.

12. The critical importance of subregional and regional cooperation in countering drug trafficking was emphasized. Representatives referred to initiatives launched by their Governments and by regional organizations, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to strengthen drug law enforcement capacities at the national and regional levels. Such cooperation had led to tangible results.

13. One of the major obstacles faced by drug law enforcement agencies in making a noticeable impact on operations of drug trafficking organizations was the exchange of operational information between African States. Improved sharing of information for cross-border cooperation was essential. It was indicated that several mechanisms existed, such as the facilities provided by the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the regional intelligence liaison office network of the Customs Cooperation Council (also called the World Customs Organization), which national law enforcement agencies were encouraged to make more use of. It was noted that meetings of HONLEA played an important role in strengthening bilateral communication between national law enforcement agencies, which was essential to efforts to counter drug trafficking operations.

14. Several representatives were of the view that the political commitment expressed by Governments of African countries to counter the drug problem should be translated into action with a budget for allocating resources to activities to address the problem. They called on the African Union to consider the drug problem to be among the priority challenges facing Africa. It was stated that the drug problem should be placed on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the African Union to be held in Mauritius. It was noted that the Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, could establish a mechanism for measuring progress made by drug law enforcement agencies in Africa, particularly on the follow-up to measures recommended for implementation at the national and regional levels.

III. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa

15. At its 7th meeting, on 3 June 2004, the Meeting considered agenda item 4, entitled "Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa". For its consideration of the item, it had before it a note by the Secretariat containing information on action taken to implement the recommendations; the information provided reflected replies (in response to a questionnaire) by the Governments of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan,

Swaziland and Zimbabwe (UNODC/HONLAF/2004/3). Completed questionnaires had also been submitted by the representatives of the Gambia, Morocco, Tunisia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The representatives of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, the Gambia, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe informed the Meeting of action taken by their Governments to implement the recommendations.

IV. Consideration of topics by working groups

16. At its 3rd to 5th meetings, on 31 May and 1 June 2004, the Meeting established working groups to examine three issues under agenda item 5, entitled "Consideration of topics by working groups". The observations made by the working groups and the conclusions reached after their consideration of the issues are presented below. For the recommendations made by the working groups and adopted by the Meeting, see chapter I above.

Issue 1. Drug trafficking, conflict and violence: the challenge to law enforcement in conflict and post-conflict situations

17. The working group on issue 1 met on 31 May 2004. In its consideration of the issue, the working group made the following observations:

(a) The relationship between drug abuse and violence was well documented, as reflected in the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2003*.¹ Studies showed that the abuse of drugs and alcohol could lead to aggressive behaviour;

(b) A conflict situation disrupted the operations of control authorities such as police and customs. The judiciary was interrupted and even the social sector ceased to be able to provide support to communities and people in need;

(c) In conflict zones in several parts of Africa, the use of child soldiers had been widespread. The child soldiers had been supplied with drugs such as cannabis, heroin, cocaine and psychotropic substances to reduce their fear, hunger, feelings of loneliness and inhibitions;

(d) A post-conflict situation often led to an environment characterized by extensive drug abuse, drug trafficking and illicit drug production. The social consequences of the conflict included an increased number of drug addicts requiring treatment after the conflict;

(e) Organized criminal groups exploited the lawlessness prevalent during conflict situations, gaining a foothold that enabled them to continue their illicit activities during the reconstruction period;

(f) Organized criminal networks operated in conflict zones, often exchanging weapons for illicit drugs.

18. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) The breakdown of law and order in conflict situations led to increased opportunities for the production of, trafficking in and abuse of illicit drugs. Combatants often financed their operations through illicit drug trafficking activities;

(b) In a post-conflict situation steps must be taken to ensure that the drug control infrastructure and authorities, as well as the judiciary and law enforcement authorities, are re-established and capable of functioning as soon as possible;

(c) Partnership should be sought with international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the civil authorities to ensure the rehabilitation of drug abusers and to sensitize the public concerning drug abuse;

(d) The strategy developed by Sierra Leone, complemented by the experiences of other countries such as Uganda, could serve as a model for other African States emerging from conflict and civil strife.

Issue 2. Emerging trafficking challenges

19. The working group on issue 2 met on 31 May 2004. In its consideration of the issue, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Africa constituted a key transit route used by drug traffickers to transport illicit drugs, in particular cocaine and heroin, from primary production areas in South-East Asia, and South-West Asia and Latin America to illicit markets in Europe and North America. International drug traffickers were attempting to take advantage of the many porous natural borders and weak port and airport controls in Africa. Heroin consignments were frequently seized, but usually in smaller amounts than cocaine consignments, which were less frequently intercepted but in larger amounts;

(b) There was increasing domestic demand for illicit drugs in Africa, with growing evidence in some countries that trafficking organizations were actively expanding their activities. Seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants were on the increase, as were the number of clandestine laboratories manufacturing synthetic drugs. There was an urgent need for African States to monitor and control the movement and use of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs;

(c) The pervasive illicit cannabis cultivation, trafficking in cannabis by organized criminal groups and the growing abuse of cannabis in Africa were the primary challenges to drug law enforcement and health authorities. The activities of organized criminal groups engaged in such activity posed a threat to the security and stability of States, and the proceeds of illicit drug crop cultivation were being used to finance the purchase of arms and ammunition, which, in turn, sustained national and regional conflicts in Africa;

(d) There was considerable concern over the increasing attempts to divert and misuse pharmaceutical preparations. The diversion and abuse of medicines were reported in countries in all parts of Africa;

(e) The effects of the illicit proceeds of drug trafficking were becoming more evident. Reports of corruption and efforts to influence government officials in the performance of their duty by offering bribes were becoming more prevalent.

20. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) There was a need for better regional cooperation in the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies of African countries in order to ensure that more front-line officers were aware of the current operating techniques employed by drug traffickers. The establishment of agency focal points responsible for facilitating information exchange and supporting requests in matters relating to current investigations would greatly enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement response;

(b) To be effective in dealing with the sophistication and adaptability of drug trafficking organizations and their use of modern technology, such as pagers, cellular phones and the Internet, it was becoming increasingly important for law enforcement agencies to maintain the highest standards of training possible. In addition, improving working relations and cooperation between national agencies and across common and regional borders was one way to make the best use of the resources and competencies available to drug law enforcement authorities;

(c) There was a need for African States to monitor the movement and use of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs, in particular amphetamine-type stimulants.

Issue 3. Cannabis: the African connection

21. The working group on issue 3 met on 1 June 2004. In its consideration of the issue, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Cannabis cultivation, production, trafficking and abuse posed a primary threat to health, security and livelihood in all African countries. Production of and trafficking in cannabis were linked to the proliferation of small arms and trafficking in other illicit commodities in Africa and contributed to instability in weakened countries;

(b) Strong political commitment was required of the Governments of all African States in order for effective action to be taken against illicit cannabis production, trafficking and abuse;

(c) Economic downturn in rural economies had led to a shift in many remote communities from the production of staple food crops to the illicit cultivation of cannabis, which offered significantly higher financial returns;

(d) Cannabis was a cheap and easily available drug of abuse in most parts of Africa, despite intensified efforts to eradicate cannabis and seize cannabis consignments in Africa. The adverse effects of cannabis abuse was most serious among persons in the age groups that were the most productive in the African economy;

(e) There was considerable smuggling of cannabis between countries in Africa; cannabis was also being smuggled out of Africa, to be sold on illicit markets in European countries and in the United States of America. For example, a survey by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime had revealed that 93 per cent of all cannabis produced in Morocco was smuggled out of the country;

(f) In many African States, the judicial process following the arrest of drug offenders was too long and consequently had an adverse impact on the prosecution of traffickers;

(g) The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Government of Morocco had undertaken a first cannabis survey, which had contributed to a refinement of the survey methodology.

22. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) The replacement of traditional food crops by illicit cannabis cultivation in economically depressed rural areas weakened national economies, making African countries less self-reliant and vulnerable;

(b) Although no comprehensive survey had been undertaken of the magnitude of cannabis production, trafficking and abuse in Africa, there was ample evidence available from empirical data, such as reports of law enforcement agencies and community health services, indicating that the detrimental effect of such illicit activity was on the increase;

(c) Well-supported alternative development programmes in rural communities at risk of illicit cannabis cultivation offered a workable option to discourage farmers from engaging in such cultivation. One major challenge was to find alternative crops that could survive the diverse climatic conditions in Africa and provide a viable financial alternative to cannabis;

(d) Cannabis control should be a priority of all national drug control strategies in Africa. Drug control should be at the top of the agenda of the African Union;

(e) There was a need to engage all sectors of society in a broad-based discussion on the subject of cannabis and its abuse in African communities;

(f) Because cannabis posed a significant threat to African communities, it was essential that, in international forums where issues related to its regulation and control were being debated, African States spoke with one voice;

(g) Faster processing and sentencing of cases through the court system would act as a positive deterrent to persons currently engaged in or contemplating such illegal activity as cannabis trafficking.

V. Interactive training session: controlled deliveries

23. At its 6th and 7th meetings, on 1 and 3 June, the Meeting considered agenda item 5 (d), entitled “Interactive training session: controlled deliveries”. The Meeting, through an interactive training module presented by a representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, reviewed the law enforcement technique of controlled delivery and ways to optimize its use, including ways to remove obstacles to its use.

VI. Organization of the Fifteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa

24. At its 7th meeting, on 3 June 2004, the Meeting considered agenda item 6, entitled “Organization of the Fifteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa”. Statements were made by the representatives of

Algeria, Burkina Faso and Egypt. The Meeting welcomed the offer of the Government of Burkina Faso to host the Fifteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, in 2005 and the offer of the Government of Algeria to host the Sixteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, in 2006.

25. The Meeting approved the following draft provisional agenda for the Fifteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, to be finalized by the Secretariat in collaboration with the country hosting that Meeting:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation.
4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Thirteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa.
5. Consideration of topics by working groups.
6. Organization of the Sixteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa.
7. Other business.
8. Adoption of the report.

VII. Other business

26. At its 7th meeting, on 3 June 2004, the Meeting considered item 7, entitled "Other business". A statement was made by the representative of the Sudan.

VIII. Adoption of the report

27. At its 7th meeting, on 3 June 2004, the Meeting adopted the report of the Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa (UNODC/HONLAF/2004/L.1 and Add.1-4), including the reports of the working groups and the recommendations contained therein.

IX. Organization of the Meeting

A. Opening and duration of the Meeting

28. The Fourteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, was held in Cairo from 30 May to 3 June 2004. The Deputy Minister of the Interior of Egypt opened the Meeting. The Director of the Anti-Narcotics General Administration of Egypt and the representative of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also addressed the participants at the opening meeting.

B. Attendance

29. The following States members of the Economic Commission for Africa were represented: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

30. Germany, Italy and the United States of America were represented by observers.

31. The African Union, the International Criminal Police Organization and the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences were represented by observers.

C. Election of officers

32. At its first meeting, on 30 May 2004, the Meeting elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Mohi El Gammal (Egypt)

Vice-Chairmen: Christophe Emmanuel Compaore (Burkina Faso)
Belkacem Boukhari (Algeria)

Rapporteur: David Sikufele (Zambia)

D. Adoption of the agenda

33. At its first meeting, on 30 May 2004, the Fourteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in countering drug trafficking.
4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa.
5. Consideration of topics by working groups:
 - (a) Drug trafficking, conflict and violence: the challenge to law enforcement in conflict and post-conflict situations;
 - (b) Emerging trafficking challenges;
 - (c) Cannabis: the African connection;
 - (d) Interactive training session: controlled deliveries.
6. Organization of the Fifteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa.

7. Other business.
8. Adoption of the report.

E. Documentation

34. The documents before the Meeting are listed in the annex.

X. Closure of the Meeting

35. Closing statements were made by the representatives of the Sudan, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Chairman of the Meeting.

Notes

- ¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XI.1.

Annex**List of documents before the Fourteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa**

<i>Document number</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/1	2	Provisional agenda, including annotations and provisional timetable
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/2	3	Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/3	4	Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twelfth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/4	6	Organization of the Fifteenth Meeting of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/5 and Add.1	5 (c)	Illicit cultivation of trafficking in and abuse of cannabis in Africa
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/L.1 and Add.1-4	8	Draft report
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/CRP.1	3	Statistics on drug trends in Africa and worldwide
UNODC/HONLAF/2004/CRP.2-18	3	Country reports