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Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of the international drug control treaties

Canada and Finland: draft resolution

Promoting prescription drug return initiatives

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Recalling the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem,¹ in which Member States agreed to tackle the world drug problem and actively promote a society free of drug abuse,

Recalling also the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961,² the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,³ and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988,⁴ as the three treaties governing activities involving internationally controlled substances and the pharmaceutical products in which they are found,

Affirming the important role entrusted to the International Narcotics Control Board of ensuring, in cooperation with Governments and in line with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, that the use of the drugs listed in those two conventions is limited to medical and scientific use and of preventing their diversion into illicit channels for trafficking and abuse,

Acknowledging the call made in the report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2011 for Member States to enact comprehensive measures aimed at stemming the abuse of prescription drugs, in particular through the establishment

* E/CN.7/2013/1.

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 520, No. 7515.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1019, No. 14956.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.



of awareness-raising programmes targeting the general public, including the establishment of proper disposal mechanisms,⁵

Concerned that the abuse of prescription drugs, including opioid analgesics, has become an issue of increasing concern among some Member States because of its impact on public safety and community well-being,

Recognizing that law enforcement agencies in some Member States are dealing with an increase in prescription drug-related crime, including pharmacy robberies, prescription drug diversion and trafficking, and drug-impaired driving,

Recognizing also that in some Member States the rates of prescription drug abuse are rising and that in many cases, some prescription drugs remain in the home after they have expired or the patient no longer requires them, and thus are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse, often by youth,

Recognizing further that providing individuals with a secure and convenient way to return unused, unneeded and expired prescription drugs, particularly those containing controlled substances, will help to raise awareness about the forms of harm associated with prescription drug abuse, and potentially reduce abuse and diversion to the illicit market,

Recognizing that such practices may also reduce the inappropriate disposal of unused, unneeded and expired medications through waste management and/or wastewater systems, which can have detrimental effects on the natural environment,

1. *Encourages* Member States to work with relevant partners and stakeholder groups, such as public health officials, pharmacists, physicians, consumer protection associations and law enforcement agencies, in promoting greater public education about the risks associated with the long-term storage of prescription drugs containing controlled substances in the home, and the potential for their diversion to the illicit market;

2. *Acknowledges* that prescription drug return initiatives established in some Member States serve as a model for the appropriate return of prescription drugs by helping to raise awareness of the forms of harm associated with the abuse and misuse of prescription drug medications and reduce the amount of those medications being diverted to the illicit market;

3. *Encourages* Member States, as appropriate, and with consideration for their unique health-care and legal systems, to develop, promote and implement such initiatives and/or enhance existing ones;

4. *Invites* Member States to consider, as appropriate, developing or strengthening regulatory frameworks that support the aforementioned measures;

5. *Encourages* Member States to exchange experiences and best practices in the establishment and operation of prescription drug return initiatives;

6. *Also encourages* Member States to promote broad community participation in prescription drug return initiatives by ensuring that individuals may

⁵ See *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.XI.5).

remove personal information from prescription drug packaging prior to return in order to protect their privacy;

7. *Further encourages* Member States to collect and submit information regarding their experience with prescription drug return initiatives to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;

8. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in consultation with relevant international organizations, including the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, to gather information from Member States by using existing mechanisms where possible, regarding experiences, challenges and best practices in the establishment and operation of prescription drug return initiatives;

9. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to report back to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-seventh session on the various initiatives taken and on the implementation of the present resolution.
