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Twenty-fifth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa

Algiers, 14-18 September 2015

Agenda item 9

Adoption of the report

Draft report

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Addendum

Consideration of topics by working groups

Issue (a): Designing effective strategies to address cannabis trafficking

1. The working group held two meetings on 15 September 2015. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Cannabis cultivation and production affect a significant proportion of African countries, while cannabis trafficking, both in the form of herb and resin, affects the continent as a whole;

(b) Illicit cultivation of cannabis destroys hundreds of hectares of forests, degrades the quality of the soil and encourages erosion, while dependency upon cannabis as a crop reduces agricultural skills and leads to a loss of important farming techniques;

(c) In order to have sustainable cannabis eradication programmes in vulnerable rural communities, there is a need to consider wide ranging options that encourage a change of mind set among farmers on cannabis being their livelihood by offering alternative development programmes and investments in rural community infrastructures;

* Available only in Arabic, English and French, which are the working languages of the subsidiary body.



(d) There are still many challenges to cooperation among law enforcement authorities across the region, particularly in the exchange of information, coordination of operations and the provision of support in undertaking enquiries related to current investigations.

2. The working group drew up the following conclusions:

(a) The cost to marginalized rural communities of illicit cannabis cultivation is too high in terms of the destruction of natural resources, efficient land use and lost farming skills;

(b) There is a need for more detailed and robust data on cannabis cultivation and production, as well as its trafficking in order to achieve an appropriate analysis and effective monitoring of trends, with the view to enabling more informed planning policies;

(c) There should be well articulated national strategies to address the illicit cultivation of cannabis based upon the accurate analysis of the economical and social situation of the rural communities engaged in cultivation;

(d) Drug enforcement authorities should be encouraged and supported to establish official lines of communication with their foreign law enforcement counterparts to regularly communicate two-way exchanges of information gathered related to combating illicit trafficking.

3. The working group adopted the following recommendations:

(a) Where they have not already done so, Governments are urged to develop well-defined national strategies to address domestic cannabis cultivation and the underlying drivers to its ongoing cultivation;

(b) Governments should be encouraged to undertake efforts to establish an open and direct dialogue with farmers on crop substitution and related community improvement programmes in order to persuade them on the benefits of legal crop cultivation as an alternative to cannabis cultivation;

(c) Governments of the region must do more to encourage and support their law enforcement authorities to develop and strengthen regional and subregional collaboration in information sharing and investigation support, as well as among agencies at the national level, in order to effectively counter trafficking and organized crime.