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Item 6 (a) 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**

Action taken by subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Report of the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. Three meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs were held in 2008: the Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Africa, held in Yamoussoukro from 8 to 12 September; the Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Tegucigalpa from 13 to 17 October; and the forty-third session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, held in Tehran from 16 to 20 November.

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/HONLAF/2008/5, UNODC/HONLAC/2008/5 and UNODC/SUBCOM/2008/5) will be made available to the Commission, upon

* E/CN.7/2009/1.



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.

II. Recommendations of subsidiary bodies

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

A. Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa

1. Managing the investigation of major drug cases and the professional handling of exhibits

5. The following recommendations were made by the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, with regard to the issue entitled “Managing the investigation of major drug cases and the professional handling of exhibits”:

(a) Governments should adopt legislation allowing for the immediate destruction of significant amounts of seized drugs after the analysis of the drugs and before the conclusion of court proceedings;

(b) A written code of procedure for the handling and storage of exhibits should be introduced;

(c) In managing the investigation of major drug cases, States were urged to make use of the incidence response teams of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and to engage in international cooperation;

(d) Governments should strive towards proactive investigations of drug cases based on the analysis of intelligence.

2. Developing successful strategies to address trafficking in cannabis

6. The following recommendations were made with regard to the issue entitled “Developing successful strategies to address trafficking in cannabis”:

(a) Governments should develop a multifaceted strategy and action plans to counter the illicit production of, trafficking in and abuse of cannabis, with particular emphasis on support for marginalized areas at risk of illicit cannabis cultivation;

(b) Governments should put in place sustainable alternative development and crop substitution programmes;

(c) Bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation should be enhanced among competent law enforcement authorities to counter the illicit cultivation of and trafficking in cannabis;

(d) Governments should support awareness-raising programmes among their populations, and should involve civil society, non-governmental organizations and the media;

(e) The international community should assist African countries in their fight against illicit cannabis cultivation, trafficking and abuse.

3. Trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants and associated problems of precursor control

7. The following recommendations were made by the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Africa, with regard to the issue entitled “Trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants and associated problems of precursor control”:

(a) Law enforcement agencies should establish or maintain close cooperation with the private sector in order to monitor and prevent diversion of precursors and other essential chemicals;

(b) The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in cooperation with Egypt, South Africa and any other country with similar competence, should work towards setting up an accredited training programme for the provision of certified training courses on the monitoring of precursor chemicals at the beginner and advanced levels;

(c) Governments should adopt adequate legislation governing the pharmaceutical sector to monitor the importation of precursor chemicals and to avoid the diversion of substances licitly manufactured for medical purposes;

(d) Governments should promote prevention campaigns to raise awareness about the effects of the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants.

B. Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

1. The region’s response to trafficking in cocaine

8. The following recommendations were made by the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, with regard to the issue entitled “The region’s response to trafficking in cocaine”:

(a) Governments must ensure that their law enforcement agencies are adequately equipped, supported and empowered with the authority they require and the resources they need to gather the information necessary to target the movement of suspicious aircraft, vessels and shipping containers believed to be involved in drug trafficking throughout the region;

(b) Governments of countries in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean should encourage and support greater cooperation and coordination between their drug law enforcement authorities and their counterparts in West Africa, so as to better target and arrest those persons responsible for trafficking in cocaine between the region and the African continent;

(c) To prevent the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants from establishing itself within their territories, Governments of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean should take steps to ensure that their legislation and administrative procedures are adequate and flexible enough to control the internationally scheduled precursor chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of

amphetamine-type stimulants and to meet the increasing challenge posed by the use of substitute chemicals in such manufacture.

2. Strengthening information exchange and operational cooperation at the inter-agency, cross-border and regional levels

9. The following recommendations were made by the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, with regard to the issue entitled “Strengthening information exchange and operational cooperation at the inter-agency, cross-border and regional levels”:

(a) Governments of countries in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean that have not already done so should develop, promulgate and endorse national strategies that support the establishment of mechanisms at the national level that enable the gathering, analysis and exchange of information and intelligence to support the provision of real-time information for operational activities at the national level and to facilitate cooperation between their national agencies and their counterparts in other countries;

(b) Governments of countries in the region should, to facilitate 24-hour coverage, taking into account factors such as staff rotation, illness and changes in agency responsibilities, support the establishment of offices to act as national focal points. The existence of those offices should be sufficiently well known to their counterparts in other countries, in order to facilitate quick contact among those counterparts as an essential requirement to enable the effective exchange of information among law enforcement and judicial authorities for the conduct of investigations and law enforcement operations across borders;

(c) States should support regular meetings of operational law enforcement agencies from neighbouring States or regional partners in order to facilitate the establishment of direct links and to provide a framework for trusted and effective information exchange and operational cooperation;

(d) States in the region should work together in order to establish a regional information and coordination centre to facilitate the undertaking of successful drug law enforcement investigations.

3. Demand reduction: law enforcement’s role in supporting effective policies

10. The following recommendations were made by the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, with regard to the issue entitled “Demand reduction: law enforcement’s role in supporting effective policies”:

(a) Governments should ensure that syllabuses based on the principles of reduction in illicit drug demand are integrated into the training programmes for officials of all law enforcement agencies (police, customs, prosecutors and judiciary) responsible for the enforcement of legislation to tackle drug abuse and trafficking;

(b) Governments of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that have not already done so should take steps to introduce within their criminal justice systems appropriate procedures to enable prisoners who are drug abusers to be provided with treatment, education, rehabilitation and reintegration services while serving their prison sentences.

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

1. Use and effectiveness of special investigative techniques, including controlled delivery as an operational response to dismantle drug trafficking groups

11. The following recommendations were made by the Subcommittee with regard to the issue entitled “Use and effectiveness of special investigative techniques, including controlled delivery as an operational response to dismantle drug trafficking groups”:

(a) Governments should ensure that appropriate legislation was in place to allow the application of advanced investigative techniques, including controlled deliveries, telephone intercepts and undercover operations, and that, to the extent possible, such legislation was compatible with that of neighbouring countries, in order to facilitate the sharing of information and the launching of combined investigations;

(b) Governments should collect detailed information on the drug trafficking situation as it relates to their national territory and should regularly provide such information to regional and/or international bodies for analysis to ensure that effective and timely countermeasures can be identified and implemented in conjunction with the other parties concerned;

(c) Governments should consider the formation of ad hoc working groups, pursuant to the recommendations adopted by the Subcommittee at its thirty-sixth session, to carry out combined investigations, including the launching and coordination of multi-jurisdictional controlled delivery operations, into cases of mutual concern, while also utilizing available regional information cells (the Central Asian Information and Coordination Centre, the Gulf Centre for Criminal Intelligence and the Tehran cell).

2. Ensuring the efficient exchange of information and extending operational cooperation against drug trafficking groups at the inter-agency, cross-border and regional levels

12. The following recommendations were made by the Subcommittee with regard to the issue entitled “Ensuring the efficient exchange of information and extending operational cooperation against drug trafficking groups at the inter-agency, cross-border and regional levels”:

(a) Governments should support the development of information exchange platforms in the Near and Middle East in order to institutionalize exchange of the operational information essential to the launching of coordinated investigations. In particular, the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime under the triangular initiative to establish the information cell in Tehran should be noted. The Tehran cell will be utilized by the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan and, once activated, will serve as a vital link not only between those three countries, but also with the Central Asian Information and Coordination Centre for States in Central Asia, and the Gulf Centre for Criminal Intelligence for States in the Persian Gulf area;

(b) Governments should develop standard operating procedures for information exchange relating to interceptions of contraband and arrests of traffickers. Those procedures should be complemented by training programmes for key staff involved in the process at the national, regional and interregional levels;

(c) In view of the increasingly complex methods employed by drug trafficking groups, a focus needs to be placed on the launching of intelligence-led investigations in order to identify, arrest and prosecute high-value targets. Where possible, combined investigations should be conducted by the Governments concerned, and the networks of drug liaison officers should be used to the fullest extent.

3. Controlling the manufacture of and addressing trafficking in synthetic drugs and associated problems in the area of precursor control

13. The following recommendations were made by the Subcommission with regard to the issue entitled “Controlling the manufacture of and addressing trafficking in synthetic drugs and associated problems in the area of precursor control”:

(a) Governments, supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, should conduct more research into the growing issue of synthetic drug abuse in the Near and Middle East, in order to enhance the capacity of front-line officers, especially through the provision of specialized training and equipment for both forensic and law enforcement agencies;

(b) Governments should address trafficking in Captagon in the region in a coordinated manner with the assistance of international organizations such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Customs Organization. With regard to the illicit manufacture of Captagon, Governments in the region should engage the assistance of the Project Prism Task Force and should, to that end, commence active participation in the operational activities already under way;

(c) Governments of exporting countries should provide pre-export notifications for all shipments of precursor chemicals using, where possible, the Pre-Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system. Use of that procedure should be extended to include pharmaceutical preparations containing substances controlled under the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988;¹

(d) Governments should also provide the International Narcotics Control Board with estimates of their annual requirements as a further measure to prevent the diversion of precursors. In addition, Governments should consider establishing quotas for the manufacture of those substances within their territory and providing the Board with that information.

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

Other recommendations of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East at its forty-third session

14. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran recommended that member States should consider ways and means of properly recognizing those law enforcement officers who gave their lives in the fight against drug trafficking, including the granting of posthumous medals of honour. In addition, the names of those officers could be recorded online by the United Nations, in a virtual “roll of honour”, based on input provided by member States. Those measures of appreciation might offer some consolation to the families of those who had fallen in the line of duty while fighting drug traffickers. The representatives of Afghanistan and Pakistan expressed support for the proposal.

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

15. Participants at the forty-third 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.

16. The Secretary of the Subcommission informed representatives that at its fifty-first session the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had focused its thematic discussion on the progress made in meeting the goals and targets set out at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and considered the final assessment report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem, which contained information collected in all the previous biennial reports.

17. It was noted that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had also adopted resolution 51/4, entitled “Preparations for the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, relating to the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly”, in which the Commission had established five open-ended intergovernmental working groups on topics covered by the action plans emanating from the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. In the resolution, the Commission had also reiterated that, at its fifty-second session, in 2009, it would hold a high-level segment to identify future goals and targets to be set in countering the world drug problem beyond 2009, as well as considering and adopting a political declaration and, as appropriate, other declarations and measures to enhance international cooperation.

18. One of the main achievements highlighted by the speakers was the adoption of balanced and comprehensive national drug control strategies and the establishment of central coordination bodies to guide and monitor drug control policies. Several representatives reported that their Governments had adopted long-term plans to address the issues of illicit drug demand and supply reduction, as well as the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. The representative of Pakistan noted that, in recent years, the number of drug abusers in his country had been reduced, despite the concurrent sharp increase in opium poppy cultivation, illicit opium production and illicit heroin manufacture in neighbouring Afghanistan.

19. Most speakers noted that their States had been resolute in fulfilling their international obligations and had joined all the relevant international treaties and

signed memorandums of understanding and extradition treaties with various States. The speakers also emphasized the importance of subregional, regional and international cooperation and the need to maintain and improve the exchange of data and intelligence, in particular among the countries in the region. To that end, the speakers had participated in various international and regional initiatives and had organized and participated in conferences and seminars. Some speakers noted the importance of cooperation with United Nations entities, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, other international organizations such as the World Customs Organization, and various regional mechanisms.

20. It was noted that regional and international cooperation was particularly important in the context of controlled deliveries. The observer for one regional organization spoke of the need of carrying out controlled deliveries in transit countries and of the difficulties posed by differing legislation.

21. In relation to emerging trends, a few speakers noted the increase in the purity of heroin from Afghanistan and one speaker commented on the recent changes in drug trafficking methods and groups, the increased use of air routes and the increase in smuggling of cannabis resin in the countries of the Persian Gulf area.

22. Some speakers noted that their Governments had taken measures to expedite judicial proceedings against drug traffickers and to ensure that they received harsher sentences. Several speakers emphasized the importance of posting drug liaison officers in as many locations as possible in order to facilitate investigations and prosecution efforts.

23. Several speakers reported that their Governments had established effective mechanisms and institutions to monitor precursor chemicals and to prevent their diversion. One representative indicated that relevant agencies in his country had organized meetings on that issue with the chemical industry. Furthermore, most representatives reported that their States had adopted comprehensive legislation to fight money-laundering and to criminalize proceeds derived from drug trafficking.

24. Some speakers noted that their Governments had been referring drug addicts to treatment facilities, instead of prosecuting them, and that in addition to establishing treatment centres, they had been involving non-governmental organizations and civil society in improving and providing treatment and rehabilitation services.

25. Some speakers noted the importance of extensive awareness-raising activities in the prevention of drug abuse, including among youth and other vulnerable populations and their families, and one speaker noted that in his country non-governmental organizations had been involved in such activities.

26. It was reported that a significant number of seizures of illicit drugs, including of amphetamine-type stimulants, had been made in several countries in the region. Moreover, a number of representatives noted that in their countries border checkpoints were equipped with the necessary equipment and physical infrastructure, while some speakers remarked on the utility of drug detection dogs, X-ray machines and other tools. Moreover, one speaker proposed that the border management agencies in the region could exchange information on drug traffickers, in order to facilitate their identification and arrest.

IV. Organization of future meetings of subsidiary bodies

27. At the Eighteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela informed the participants of the offer by his Government to host the Nineteenth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2009.

28. At the forty-third session of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, the representative of Lebanon informed the participants of the offer by his Government to host the forty-fourth session of the Subcommittee, in 2009.
