



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
11 December 2013

Original: English

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## Commission on Narcotic Drugs

### Fifty-seventh session

Vienna, 17-21 March 2014

Item [...] of the provisional agenda\*

**Policy directives to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and strengthening the drug programme and the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as its governing body, including administrative, budgetary and strategic management questions: work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and policy directives**

## Documentation prepared for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

### Report of the Secretariat

#### *Summary*

The present report has been prepared by the Secretariat pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs decision 55/1. It contains an analysis of the documentation for the Commission, based on a thorough review of related mandates. Recommendations are made on possibilities to further improve and reduce the yearly reporting requirements. The report follows the structure of the report of the Secretariat on documentation prepared for the twenty-second session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/CN.15/2013/13).

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\* E/CN.7/2014/1.



## **I. Introduction**

1. In its decision 55/1, entitled “Organization of work for the future sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs”, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, bearing in mind the need to maintain budget discipline, to use conference services in a cost-effective manner and to conduct its work more efficiently, requested the Secretariat to submit a report to the Commission at its fifty-seventh session related to documentation prepared for the Commission. The present report has been prepared in response to that request and includes information on the costs and on the number and frequency of issuance of such documents, the efforts made by the Secretariat to increase internal efficiencies in the manner in which it produces such documentation and the savings linked to those efficiencies. The report offers recommendations on those issues, including exploring possibilities to further improve and reduce the yearly reporting requirements through a thorough examination of its current mandates, with a view to identifying outdated or duplicative mandates.

2. The present report contains an analysis of the documentation prepared for the last three sessions of the Commission and the documentation requested by the Commission for future sessions, including for the high-level review of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, to be conducted by the Commission at its fifty-seventh session, in 2014. The analysis contained in the report does not cover the documentation for the reconvened sessions of the Commission, since such documentation includes a limited number of reports related to the biennial consolidated budget and the work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

3. The report follows the structure of the report of the Secretariat on documentation prepared for the twenty-second session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/CN.15/2013/13), which was prepared pursuant to Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice decision 21/1.

## **II. Documentation prepared for the Commission**

### **A. Number and frequency of documents produced**

4. The documents to be prepared for the consideration of the Commission at each session are forecast by the Secretariat, pursuant to existing and new mandates. Documents prepared every year pursuant to standing or recurring reporting obligations (see annex I) include the following: the provisional agenda and annotations; the report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug abuse; the report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug trafficking; the report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNODC; the report of the Secretariat on action taken by the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; and the note by the Secretariat on promoting coordination and alignment of decisions between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the

Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

5. Other recent standing or recurring reporting obligations include the documentation related to the work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC, which has been prepared for every session of the Commission since its fifty-second session, in 2009, as well as notes by the Secretariat on the organization of the round-table discussions, which have been prepared since the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, in 2010, stemming from the replacement of the thematic debate with the round-table discussions.<sup>1</sup>

6. Other standing or recurring reporting obligations require documents to be prepared biennially, including the following: the notes on the proposed strategic framework or the reports on the implementation of the consolidated budget; the report of the Executive Director on responding to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases among drug users, which has been prepared biennially since the fifty-first session of the Commission, in accordance with Commission resolution 49/4; and the report of the Executive Director on action taken to implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, prepared biennially starting from 2012, in accordance with Commission resolution 53/16.

7. Upon initiation of the process laid out in the three international drug control conventions,<sup>2</sup> a note by the Secretariat on the changes in the scope of control of substances is prepared in order to enable the Commission to consider proposals to add substances to the schedules and tables or to transfer or delete substances from the schedules and tables, as mandated by the three international drug control conventions. Such a note on the changes in the scope of control of substances was presented to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session (E/CN.7/2013/11).

8. Documents prepared pursuant to new mandates contained in recent Commission, Economic and Social Council or General Assembly resolutions or decisions are usually prepared only once and are based on the specific reporting obligations contained in those resolutions and decisions (see annex II). In most cases, those documents are due to be submitted to the session of the Commission following the adoption of the resolution or decision containing the mandate.

9. As may be observed from both annexes to the present report, the number of documents prepared for the past three regular sessions of the Commission has remained stable (14 documents for the fifty-fourth session; 18 documents for the fifty-fifth session; 15 documents for the fifty-sixth session).

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<sup>1</sup> As reflected in annex I, the note by the Secretariat on the organization of the round-table discussions at the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions (E/CN.7/2011/8) was prepared for the fifty-fourth session of the Commission and then only redistributed at its fifty-fifth session.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to article 3 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, article 2 of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and article 12 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

10. For the past three sessions of the Commission, the number of documents prepared pursuant to new mandates was significantly lower than the number of documents prepared pursuant to standing or recurrent obligations. The relation between the two was 5 to 9 in 2011; 8 to 10 in 2012; and 3 to 12 in 2013. As can be observed in annex I, some of the standing or recurrent mandates are directly linked to the three international drug control conventions.

## **B. Costs of documents produced**

11. The cost of editing and translating documents depends on the total number of words submitted. The cost of producing a document with a double symbol that is submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is the same as the cost of producing one with a single symbol. Reproduction costs are not reduced. The unit cost of translation at the United Nations Office at Vienna varies every year depending on the workload and the capacity of the services. In 2012, it was \$250 per page for translation into one language and in 2013 it was \$236 per page for translation into one language. A standard 8,500-word report in all six official languages thus costs approximately \$31,000. In addition, there are indirect costs, which include the time and resources used by the staff of relevant sections of UNODC in order to draft and coordinate the documents.

## **C. Efforts made by the Secretariat to produce documents more efficiently**

12. Efforts to increase efficiency in the production of documents are made at the drafting stage and when coordinating documents, as well as during the processing of documentation by the Conference Management Services. In preparing for each session of the Commission, the Secretariat explores possibilities for combining documents of similar or overlapping subject matter, taking into account applicable word limits. In cases where it is necessary to produce separate documents on a similar subject, cross-references are included in the documents in order to avoid duplication and to ensure their complementarity. If only limited information is available, for example, owing to a low level of responses to questionnaires, alternatives may include postponing the report to a later session or reporting orally to the Commission.

13. Measures taken to increase efficiencies in preparing the documentation for the Commission have included the consolidation of reporting obligations related to drug control and crime prevention and criminal justice in the annual report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNODC so that the report covers the activities of the Office with regard to both drug control and crime prevention and criminal justice. Moreover, the report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNODC presented to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission contained information on the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/34, as well as on Commission resolution 54/14. The report prepared for the Commission at its fifty-sixth session contained information on the implementation of its resolutions 55/1, 55/9 and 55/10, as well as its resolutions 54/12 and 54/15.

14. In addition, three of the new reporting obligations emanating from the fifty-fifth session of the Commission, in 2012, were incorporated into already existing standing or recurring reporting obligations, which therefore did not require additional resources. Efforts to further improve and reduce the yearly reporting requirements continued for new mandates arising from the fifty-sixth session, in 2013. For instance, the reporting requirement arising from Commission resolution 56/6 will be fulfilled by including relevant information in the biennial reports of the Executive Director on the implementation of resolution 49/4.

15. Any efforts to prepare the documents for the Commission in the most efficient way possible and to keep their number to the minimum necessary must take into account that the word limit applicable to pre-session documentation is 8,500 words per document. Thus, even if there are several reporting obligations on similar or overlapping subject matters, there may not be sufficient space to cover them in one document. Moreover, relevant resolutions or decisions that included specific mandates have in some cases been adopted by the Commission on the understanding that a separate document would be prepared. By streamlining or consolidating the documents in such cases, the Secretariat would deviate from the request of Member States.

16. The preparation of documents is increasingly subject to the availability of additional extrabudgetary resources. As stated in the relevant financial statements made in accordance with rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, should those resources not be provided, the documents in question would not be prepared. Additional extrabudgetary resources were required for three of the reports requested by the Commission in 2012<sup>3</sup> and for two in 2013.<sup>4</sup>

17. Further efforts to find efficiencies are made at the stage of processing documents, which includes editing, translation, layout work, printing and distribution. The work process and staffing arrangements have been adapted to increased use of information technology in the preparation of documents and of translation memory software to increase the efficiency and speed of translation, as well as increased levels of outsourcing. In order to avoid printing excess copies that would need to be destroyed afterwards, distribution lists are kept under constant review. Electronic distribution of documentation would significantly reduce costs in relation to the printing of reports. This matter is currently being widely discussed within United Nations entities under the paper-smart concept.

18. It should also be mentioned that the regular budget, which includes conference management in Vienna, does not automatically allocate the resources (in terms of number of pages to translate or days that interpreters are required) that would be necessary to implement the mandates for meetings and documentation included in the section of the regular budget relating to UNODC. Moreover, funds under the conference services budget section are being consistently reduced, while the demand for services, especially translation, remains high. To bridge the gap between the allocated resources and the growing demand for documentation, the Conference Management Service at the United Nations Office at Vienna has introduced a capping system that sets documentation limits for all major client organizations,

<sup>3</sup> See E/CN.7/2012/CRP.7.

<sup>4</sup> See E/CN.7/2013/CRP.5.

based on historical workload and projections for the current period. The system was introduced in 2010 and has been applied since. With the cooperation of the substantive secretariats and the understanding of Member States, the Conference Management Service has so far managed to meet requirements for documentation.

#### **D. Examination of current mandates**

19. In order to identify outdated or duplicative mandates, the difference between standing or recurring reporting obligations and specific reporting obligations must be kept in mind. There are almost no overlaps between the documents prepared pursuant to standing and recurring reporting obligations.

20. In the case of documents prepared pursuant to specific reporting obligations (see annex II), there may be some overlaps with the subject matter of standing or recurring reporting obligations (see annex I). However, as explained above, the Secretariat is making efforts to avoid any repetition or redundancies in order to ensure the full complementarity of all documents submitted to each session of the Commission, in particular by consolidating reporting obligations wherever possible.

### **III. Conclusions and recommendations**

21. Any increase in the number of new mandates and a resulting increase in the number of pre-session documents places additional burdens on the Secretariat. All possible efforts to economize are being made by the Secretariat, especially by increasing internal efficiencies and exploring possibilities to streamline reporting obligations.

22. There are nevertheless further options available for Member States and the Commission to streamline reporting obligations. In that regard, the Commission may wish to take the following actions:

(a) Explore the further streamlining of existing reporting obligations, including by reducing the frequency of reports or by consolidating different reports into a single document;

(b) Explore the possibility of limiting the number of agenda items, as well as new reporting obligations in the resolutions adopted every year by the Commission, bearing in mind that mandates should be clear about the reporting requirements in terms of volume and periodicity, as well as source of funding;

(c) Review the necessity of having written reports in all languages;

(d) Explore the possibility of requiring oral instead of written reports;

(e) Review mandates for recurring documentation in terms of relevance to current policy, including by exploring the question of whether agenda items and the relevant reports could be considered on a biennial basis and whether agenda items that are no longer a priority could be replaced by items of current interest;

(f) Explore the possibility of making use of advances in digital media by, inter alia, increasing the use of electronic distribution and digital meeting records.

## Annex I

## Standing or recurring reporting obligations

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Fifty-fourth session</i>	<i>Fifty-fifth session</i>	<i>Fifty-sixth session</i>	<i>Mandate</i>
Agenda	Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.7/2011/1)	Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.7/2012/1)	Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.7/2013/1)	Economic and Social Council resolution 9 (I) and rules 5 and 7 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council
Demand reduction	Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2011/2)	Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2012/2)	Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug abuse (E/CN.7/2013/2)	1961 Convention, <sup>a</sup> article 18; 1971 Convention, <sup>b</sup> article 16; Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 53/16 and 54/9
Report of the Executive Director	Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (E/CN.7/2011/3-E/CN.7/2011/3)	Report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNODC (E/CN.7/2012/3-E/CN.15/2012/3)	Report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNODC (E/CN.7/2013/3-E/CN.15/2013/3)	Combination of several reporting obligations deriving from Economic and Social Council resolution 9 (I), as well as other relevant resolutions and decisions
Supply reduction	Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug trafficking (E/CN.7/2011/4)	Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug trafficking (E/CN.7/2012/4)	Report of the Secretariat on the world situation with regard to drug trafficking (E/CN.7/2013/4)	1961 Convention, articles 18 and 35; 1971 Convention, article 16; 1988 Convention, <sup>c</sup> article 20; Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 53/16 and 54/9 (as well as 56/5 for future reports)
Subsidiary bodies	Report of the Secretariat on action taken by the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/CN.7/2011/5)	Report of the Secretariat on action taken by the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/CN.7/2012/5)	Report of the Secretariat on action taken by the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/CN.7/2013/5)	Economic and Social Council resolutions 1845 (LVI) and 1985/11; Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 6 (XXX)

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Fifty-fourth session</i>	<i>Fifty-fifth session</i>	<i>Fifty-sixth session</i>	<i>Mandate</i>
Standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC	Note by the Secretariat on the work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC (E/CN.7/2011/9-E/CN.15/2011/9)	Note by the Secretariat on the work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC (E/CN.7/2012/12-E/CN.15/2012/12)	Note by the Secretariat on the work of the standing open-ended working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC (E/CN.7/2013/7-E/CN.15/2013/7)	Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/13 and Economic and Social Council decisions 2009/251 and 2011/258
Strategic framework/consolidated budget	Report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the consolidated budget for the biennium 2010-2011 for UNODC (E/CN.7/2011/11-E/CN.15/2011/11)	Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/CN.7/2012/6-E/CN.15/2012/6)	Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/CN.7/2012/6-E/CN.15/2012/6)	Rule 104.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8) General Assembly resolution 61/252, section XI, paragraph 1
Prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases among drug users		Report of the Executive Director on responding to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne disease among drug users (E/CN.7/2012/16)		Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 49/4 (as well as 56/6 for future reports)
Coordination between UNODC and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	Note by the Secretariat on promoting coordination and alignment of decisions between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS (E/CN.7/2011/10)	Note by the Secretariat on promoting coordination and alignment of decisions between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS (E/CN.7/2012/7)	Note by the Secretariat on promoting coordination and alignment of decisions between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS (E/CN.7/2013/9)	Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 51/14
Round-table discussions	Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the round-table discussions at the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions (E/CN.7/2011/8)		Note by the Secretariat on organization of the round-table discussions at the fifty-sixth session (E/CN.7/2013/13)	Implicit mandate (based on the inclusion of the relevant agenda item)

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Fifty-fourth session</i>	<i>Fifty-fifth session</i>	<i>Fifty-sixth session</i>	<i>Mandate</i>
Changes in the scope of control of substances			Note by the Secretariat on changes in the scope of control of substances (E/CN.7/2013/11 and Add.1)	1961 Convention, article 3; paragraph 8 (a); 1971 Convention, article 2, paragraph 17(2); 1988 Convention, article 12, paragraph 21
Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem		Report of the Executive Director on Action taken by Member States to implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action (E/CN.7/2012/14 and Corr. 1)		Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 53/16

<sup>a</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

<sup>b</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1019, No. 14956.

<sup>c</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

## **Annex II**

### **Specific reporting obligations**

#### **Fifty-fourth session**

Report of the Executive Director on support for the development and implementation of the regional programmes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (E/CN.7/2011/6-E/CN.15/2011/6)

Report of the Executive Director on promoting international cooperation in addressing the involvement of women and girls in drug trafficking, especially as couriers (E/CN.7/2011/7)

Note by the Secretariat on follow-up to the promotion of best practices and lessons learned for the sustainability and integrality of alternative development programmes and the proposal to organize an international workshop and conference on alternative development (E/CN.7/2011/12)

Report of the Executive Director on measures to protect children and young people from drug abuse (E/CN.7/2011/13)

Note by the Secretariat on the review of management and administration in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (E/CN.7/2011/14)

#### **Fifty-fifth session**

Note by the Secretariat on follow-up to the promotion of best practices and lessons learned for the sustainability and integrality of alternative development programmes and to the proposal to organize an international workshop and conference on alternative development (E/CN.7/2012/8)

Addendum to the note by the Secretariat on follow-up to the promotion of best practices and lessons learned for the sustainability and integrality of alternative development programmes and the proposal to organize an international workshop and conference on alternative development (E/CN.7/2012/8/Add.1)

Report of the Executive Director on promoting adequate availability of internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion and abuse (E/CN.7/2012/9-E/CN.15/2012/9)

Report of the Executive Director on the Paris Pact initiative (E/CN.7/2012/10)

Report of the Executive Director on improving quality and building monitoring capacity for the collection, reporting and analysis of data on the world drug problem and policy responses to it (E/CN.7/2012/11)

Report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in countering the covert administration of psychoactive substances related to sexual assault and other criminal acts (E/CN.7/2012/13)

Report of the Secretariat on the implementation of resolutions and decisions relating to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime adopted during the period 2008-2011 in which action by the Office was requested (E/CN.7/2012/15)

Note by the Secretariat on the Paris Pact initiative (E/CN.7/2012/17)

### **Fifty-sixth session**

Report of the Executive Director on the outcome of the high-level International Conference on Alternative Development (E/CN.7/2013/8)

Report of the Secretariat on the use of cannabis seeds for illicit cultivation (E/CN.7/2013/10)

Report of the Executive Director on Follow-up to the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners on Combating Illicit Traffic in Opiates Originating in Afghanistan (E/CN.7/2013/12)

### **Fifty-seventh session**

Report of the Executive Director on Action taken by Member States to implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem (E/CN.7/2014/[...])

Report by the Secretariat on promoting programmes aimed at the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of drug-dependent persons released from prison settings (oral report only)

Report by the Secretariat on documentation prepared for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/CN.7/2014/6)

Report of the Executive Director on the progress achieved and measures taken in implementation of the fourth phase of the Paris Pact initiative (E/CN.7/2014/[...], subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funding)

### **Fifty-eighth session**

Report by the Executive Director on enhancing international cooperation to strengthen efforts in West Africa to counter illicit drug trafficking (mandate contained in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 56/16)

Report of the Secretariat on the implementation of resolutions and decisions relating to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime adopted during the period 2012-2015 in which action by the Office was requested (mandate contained in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 56/11)