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**Follow-up to the implementation at the national,
regional and international levels of all
commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial
Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the
world drug problem**

Strengthening international cooperation in combating illicit opiates originating in Afghanistan through continuous and reinforced support to the Paris Pact initiative

Report of the Secretariat

Summary

In its resolution 56/3 entitled “Strengthening international cooperation in combating illicit opiates originating in Afghanistan through continuous and reinforced support to the Paris Pact initiative”, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs welcomed and reiterated its support for the Paris Pact initiative as one of the most important international frameworks and a unique platform for genuine partnership between States, competent international organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the fight against opiates originating in Afghanistan. The Commission continued to call upon Member States, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other entities, to ensure the full implementation of the Vienna Declaration, the outcome document of the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners on Combating Illicit Traffic in Opiates Originating in Afghanistan, held on 16 February 2012. As requested by the Commission, the present report describes the steps taken by UNODC to implement the resolution in 2021.

* [E/CN.7/2022/1](#).



I. Background

1. The Vienna Declaration adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact Partners on Combating Illicit Traffic in Opiates Originating in Afghanistan, held in February 2012,¹ is a statement of international commitment to act in a balanced and comprehensive manner against the menace of opiates originating in Afghanistan. In the Declaration, participants prioritized four main areas, also known as pillars, for enhanced cooperation: (a) regional initiatives; (b) financial flows linked to traffic in opiates; (c) preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals; and (d) reducing drug abuse and dependence. The Conference signified an important landmark for the Paris Pact, as partners reaffirmed their common and shared responsibility towards combating opiates. The Vienna Declaration serves as a blueprint for the activities of the Paris Pact partnership and reflects the partnership's commitment to strengthening international and regional cooperation to counter, in a balanced manner, the global challenge and threat that opiates pose to international peace and stability in different regions of the world.

2. In its resolution 56/3, entitled "Strengthening international cooperation in combating illicit opiates originating in Afghanistan through continuous and reinforced support to the Paris Pact initiative", the Commission on Narcotic Drugs recognized the initiative's importance as one of the most significant international frameworks and a unique platform for genuine partnership between Member States, competent international organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the fight against opiates originating in Afghanistan.²

3. The Vienna Declaration provides a framework for the partnership's response to the current international challenges and the corresponding international commitments outlined in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem",³ which are aimed at countering trafficking in narcotic drugs and addressing links with other forms of organized crime.

4. The Paris Pact partnership's support for the four pillars of the Vienna Declaration significantly contributes towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.⁴ Under the Paris Pact global programme, the 81 members of the partnership receive assistance in prioritizing their support in line with Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) and 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) in particular.

5. The Paris Pact has two dimensions. The first is the partnership itself, currently made up of 58 countries and 23 organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The partnership is responsible for defining priorities and implementing measures in line with the Vienna Declaration, based on the principle of shared responsibility. The partnership serves as an advocacy platform at the highest political level for global dialogue aimed at promoting good practices, adapting responses to evolving threats along drug trafficking routes, encouraging interregional collaboration and providing stronger evidence for coordinated action.

6. The second dimension is the global programme established by UNODC on behalf of the partnership to facilitate the intergovernmental dialogue under the initiative and provide coordination support through the programme's three core components: the consultative mechanism, the liaison officer network, and information management. Currently, the programme is supporting the fourth phase of the Paris Pact initiative.

¹ See [E/CN.7/2012/17](#).

² See [E/CN.7/2013/14](#).

³ General Assembly resolution [S-30/1](#), annex.

⁴ See General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

7. The Paris Pact is the only global cooperation mechanism dedicated to countering illicit opiates. It provides a global platform for focused, concrete action aimed at reducing trafficking, production and global consumption of opiates, including the cultivation of opium poppy. The importance of the Paris Pact has been recognized in multiple resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as one of the most important frameworks in the fight against opiates originating in Afghanistan, as part of a comprehensive approach to peace, stability and development in Afghanistan, the neighbouring region and beyond.

8. In the current, fast-evolving and highly worrying humanitarian emergency situation in Afghanistan, the emerging threats have implications not only for the country and its population, but equally for the wider region and the international community. The challenges to security and development call for concerted efforts, political will, cooperation and the support of the international community for mutually reinforcing and effective counter-narcotics measures. In that context, within its mandates, the Paris Pact initiative plays a central role by supporting the international community in strengthening regional and international cooperation, facilitating efforts to keep intersecting drug-, crime- and terrorism-related threats in and around Afghanistan on the international agenda and fostering political momentum for the necessary operational responses.

9. The work undertaken under the auspices of the Paris Pact initiative is implemented in close partnership with other international and regional cooperation efforts made in the area of drug control. The current challenges and increased complexity of drug control and demand clearly demonstrate the need to continue strengthening the Paris Pact initiative and its capacity to further develop and intensify these partnerships in responding to rapid shifts in opiate trafficking patterns and trends within the broader context of combating transnational organized crime.

II. Status of implementation of Commission resolution 56/3

A. Strategic and expert-level dialogue

10. The rapidly evolving landscape of threats relating to drugs, organized crime and terrorism in Afghanistan, the region and beyond, and, more specifically, the emerging new challenges in combating drug trafficking along the key trafficking routes from Afghanistan require the Paris Pact partnership to continually refine its focus to inform the development of adequate operational responses.

11. During the reporting period, the Paris Pact global programme strengthened collaboration between the Paris Pact partners by supporting identification of the newly emerging threats and risks posed by the illicit trafficking of opiates originating in Afghanistan. The meetings and other consultations held in the framework of the partnership promoted inter-thematic and interregional coordination in identifying operational priorities and the sharing of information in support of the Vienna Declaration.

12. In 2021, the global dialogue undertaken under the Paris Pact consultative mechanism remained focused on taking stock of the prioritized recommendations previously adopted under the four thematic pillars of the Vienna Declaration. Despite the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Paris Pact programme was able to successfully organize all four meetings of the consultative mechanism in accordance with its workplan. As a way of overcoming the obstacles related to COVID-19, the meetings, which included three expert working group meetings and a Policy Consultative Group meeting, were held in a hybrid format allowing for both in-person attendance and participation via a virtual platform. In total, the meetings held under the Paris Pact initiative in 2021 were attended by nearly 600 delegates representing geographically widely spread partner States and organizations. In addition, throughout the reporting period, several in-person informal consultations

with partners were held in support of the coordination of the partnership and its consultative mechanism.

B. Update on the UNODC Paris Pact programme

13. Through its Paris Pact Coordination Unit, UNODC acts as the coordinator for the Paris Pact partnership and supports the partnership in realizing its goals through the Paris Pact programme. The programme brings together relevant UNODC operational capacities at the global, regional and country levels, supporting the formulation of recommendations at expert meetings and the identification of priorities for action.

Consultative mechanism

14. The two-pronged consultative mechanism of the Paris Pact initiative facilitates regular expert and policy consultations between the 81 Paris Pact partners to identify operational priorities and adapt responses to evolving threats along the opiate trafficking routes. By leveraging the comparative advantages of UNODC and other partners, the initiative enables the development of evidence-based policies and strategies and the implementation of enhanced measures guided by state-of-the-art expert information and knowledge regarding operational best practices disseminated among the partners through the consultative mechanism.

15. In view of the restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Paris Pact Coordination Unit modified the programme's modus operandi by providing for the additional possibility of joining all expert and policy meetings held in the framework of the partnership via an online platform.

16. All targets at the strategic and operational levels for the period under review were met; expert working group meetings relating to the first, second and third pillars of the Vienna Declaration were held, and the fifteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting was held on 15 and 16 November 2021. The expert working groups reviewed the status of the implementation of priorities regarding the respective pillars of the Vienna Declaration that had been determined in the earlier meetings and adjusted the recommendations as required. The working groups also facilitated the strengthening of existing, and the development of new, inter-thematic synergies for information-sharing and international and regional cooperation in the context of the newly emerging threats along the opiate trafficking routes from Afghanistan.

17. In the framework of the second pillar of the Vienna Declaration, the meeting of the expert working group devoted to detecting and blocking financial flows linked to illicit traffic in opiates originating in Afghanistan was held in a hybrid format in Vienna on 7 and 8 October 2021. The event brought together over 150 participants, among them senior level representatives from law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, as well as financial intelligence units, representing 36 States and 12 international and regional organizations. The participants reviewed existing gaps and challenges and identified necessary operational actions to counter illicit financial flows, with a particular focus on the risks posed by the illicit use of virtual assets, and asset recovery. At the meeting, the experts underlined, *inter alia*, the importance of gathering good practices regarding the disruption of contactless drug purchases. Delegates took stock of the previously adopted recommendations and agreed on four specific priority recommendations emanating from the discussions.

18. The expert working group on precursors, relating to the third pillar of the Vienna Declaration, was held in a hybrid format in Vienna on 28 and 29 October 2021. The event brought together over 100 participants, including senior level representatives and experts from 34 Member States and 11 international and regional organizations. Updates on the latest trends in the smuggling of precursor chemicals destined for use in illicit heroin manufacture, including the routes and techniques used, were discussed, building on the successes of existing operationally oriented frameworks for cooperation, including the regional intelligence working group on precursors.

Other main topics discussed included the importance of strengthening interregional cooperation, the promotion of information-sharing, strengthening precursor regulations, standardizing analytical forensic methodologies to allow comparable results to be shared and analysed and forensic intelligence and investigative capacities to be strengthened, and building on new operational initiatives to improve risk profiling and promote cooperation with the chemical industry. Participants took stock of the recommendations adopted at the previous expert-level meeting on precursors, held in Shanghai, China, in November 2019, and agreed on nine priority recommendations emanating from the discussions.

19. The recommendations put forward by the expert working groups convened during the reporting period regarding the second and third pillars of the Vienna Declaration were subsequently considered and endorsed at the fifteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting, held on 15 and 16 November 2021.

20. The expert working group on cross-border cooperation, corresponding to the first pillar of the Vienna Declaration, held its first meeting since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Moscow on 15 and 16 December 2021. The event was conducted in a hybrid format and was hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation. It brought together more than 150 participants from 31 countries and 14 international and regional organizations, with more than 50 participants attending in person. During the opening session, the delegates were addressed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, as well as by the Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The meeting resulted in eight priority recommendations identified for implementation by Paris Pact partners. Participants stressed the importance of the Paris Pact initiative for effective cooperation at the regional, interregional and global levels, in view of the worsening security situation in Afghanistan.

21. The fifteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting, organized by the Paris Pact Coordination Unit and held in a hybrid format, was hosted by UNODC in Vienna on 15 and 16 November 2021. The event was attended by over 150 participants, representing 34 countries and 11 international and regional organizations. The partnership acknowledged the growing relevance of the Paris Pact initiative and reiterated the importance of international and regional cooperation in addressing the threat posed by opiates, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility and the application of a comprehensive approach.

22. At the policy meeting, in line with its implementation review function, the partners discussed the initiative's strategic and operational workplan and agenda for 2022 and endorsed the recommendations and key points stemming from the most recent expert meetings held in relation to the four pillars of the Vienna Declaration. Partners provided updates regarding current and emerging drug trafficking patterns and trends, and recent operational developments, including those under the auspices of the UNODC regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries. The UNODC research brief entitled "Drug situation in Afghanistan 2021: latest findings and emerging threats" was launched at the meeting by representatives of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch of UNODC.

23. Throughout the reporting period, the Paris Pact Coordination Unit maintained an active, informal dialogue with stakeholders and partners by holding a series of meetings, involving both videoconferencing and in-person informal consultations, that brought together partners to discuss the partnership's newly developed operational modality and priorities.

Liaison officer network

24. The network of field-based Paris Pact liaison officers located along the major trafficking routes leading out of Afghanistan, under the supervision of the Paris Pact Coordination Unit, continued to support the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Paris Pact partnership. The core role of the liaison officers as primary points of contact in the field for the Paris Pact programme and its

consultative mechanism has often extended to facilitating other UNODC programmes covering a variety of inter-thematic issues in support of the Vienna Declaration. For example, in collaboration with relevant UNODC global, regional and country programmes, the Paris Pact liaison officer located in Central Asia delivered specialized training courses for law enforcement practitioners in West and Central Asia to strengthen their research and analytical skills, including on the use of statistical and spatial analysis.

25. The liaison officers continued to improve the availability of data for the purpose of enabling partners' evidence-based responses to the opiate threat. They contributed to studies conducted and reports disseminated by the Research and Trend Analysis Branch of UNODC, including the *World Drug Report 2021*. The liaison officers also supported the mandated annual data collection carried out by UNODC, assisting Member States in complying with their reporting responsibilities.

26. The liaison officers updated the Paris Pact country fact sheets for 2021 with data on national- and regional-level drug and precursor indicators for countries in Central Asia, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and West Asia. The updated fact sheets were also used for the *World Drug Report 2021* and to support partners in evidence-based programme development and implementation in the field.

27. In the reporting period, the Paris Pact Coordination Unit initiated the realignment of the geographical coverage of the liaison officer network, adapting to the needs identified along the major trafficking routes for opiates. To that end, the Paris Pact programme conducted missions to Turkey and the United Republic of Tanzania, where meetings were held with key national stakeholders and counterparts to discuss the strengthening of both countries' engagement with the Paris Pact initiative. As an outcome of the meetings, the respective national agencies expressed strong support for the Paris Pact, stressing its growing importance, and welcomed the presence of Paris Pact programme in both countries as of January 2022.

28. Subsequently, a new national liaison officer position was established in Ankara, reflecting the strategic position of Turkey on the Balkan route. Similarly, responding to the growing importance of the southern route in general and the key role played by Eastern Africa in that regard, a national liaison officer position was operationalized in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, in January 2022. Also in January 2022, the Paris Pact programme was able to fill the previously vacant liaison officer position in Pakistan, which is situated on a key trajectory of the southern trafficking route.

Information management

29. In line with the recommendations of the independent midterm evaluation of the Paris Pact programme and following the decisions taken at the fourteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting, a new bilingual Paris Pact web portal, in English and Russian, was developed jointly with the UNODC Information Technology Service and launched on 24 September 2021. The new web-based tool provides a wealth of updated information on the implementation of the activities under the four thematic pillars of the Vienna Declaration and enables its users to access detailed information on all the events organized in the framework of the partnership, including the specific recommendations adopted by the partners. Since the launch of the portal, the Paris Pact programme has used it to disseminate to the partners regularly updated information on the implementation of the activities of the Paris Pact initiative.

C. Synergies

30. In the fast-evolving and highly worrying humanitarian emergency situation in Afghanistan, the Paris Pact initiative partner States and organizations have underlined the importance of the initiative's well-established position and critical role in supporting the international community in strengthening regional and international cooperation to combat illicit traffic in opiates, as well as opium cultivation, and

manufacture and consumption of heroin and other opiates originating in Afghanistan. The strengthened capacity of the Paris Pact partnership, as provided for in Commission resolution 56/3, and its role as a global platform for dialogue between international and regional partners, has been recognized as key to efficient promotion and dissemination of state-of-the-art operational practices and enhancing the formulation of evidence-based policies and strategies to rapidly adapt to evolving threats along the opiate trafficking routes.

31. The Paris Pact initiative is a key element of the interregional, interdivisional, and inter-thematic approach adopted by UNODC, the technical lead partner organization of the Paris Pact. The Paris Pact programme ensures the meaningful engagement of relevant UNODC programmes in the Paris Pact consultative mechanism. During the reporting period, coordination with relevant UNODC sections, units and programmes, as well as partner organizations, was further strengthened and new synergies were identified.

32. The Paris Pact programme closely interacts with UNODC at the global, regional and country levels, including through the Regional Section for Europe, West and Central Asia (through the regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, the regional programme for South-Eastern Europe and the programme for Central Asia), the Justice Section (through the Global Maritime Crime Programme), the Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch (through its Implementation Support Section, the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, the Container Control Programme and the Global Programme on Building Effective Networks against Transnational Organized Crime), the Drug Prevention and Health Branch (through its Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section), and the Research and Trend Analysis Branch (through its Drug Research Section, Laboratory and Scientific Service and Data Development and Dissemination Section).

33. The regional programmes, the main operational vehicles of UNODC for the Paris Pact, continued to play an important role in putting Paris Pact-driven recommendations and strategies into action. The regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, with the support of the respective country programmes, continued to increase the coherence and effectiveness of Paris Pact partner interventions in the region.

34. The strategic priorities of the Paris Pact, as defined at its Policy Consultative Group meetings, have subsequently been operationalized by multiple organizations, programmes, funds and projects managed and implemented by members of the partnership, including UNODC.

35. The growing importance of the southern route requires more intense involvement of the Paris Pact programme, in coordination with the relevant UNODC thematic and regional programmes (such as the Global Maritime Crime Programme and the regional programmes in the Arab States and Eastern Africa), and other partners. In the reporting period, in conjunction with the continued work along the northern route and recently initiated strategic efforts along the Balkan route (in Turkey), the Paris Pact programme further advanced operational synergies by adjusting its liaison officer network to shifts in opiate trafficking routes and rapidly started to address the knowledge gaps and support operational responses in the respective regional and country settings along the southern route.

D. Sustainability of the UNODC Paris Pact programme

36. In the reporting period, the Paris Pact Coordination Unit revitalized its operational modalities and initiated the development of new strategic programme components in consultation with its partners. The new components were aimed at further leveraging the interlinked, complementary core components of the Paris Pact and strengthening the Paris Pact initiative, pursuant to Commission resolution 56/3.

37. New proposed modalities, aligned with the comparative advantages of the Paris Pact, were presented at the fifteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting and discussed among the senior representatives of the partner States and organizations participating in the meeting. The partners acknowledged the well-established role of the Paris Pact initiative within its mandates, its proven convening capacity regarding policy engagement and coordination, and its strategic position in the fast-evolving situation in and around Afghanistan, and beyond, along the main opiate trafficking routes from Afghanistan.

38. Moving forward, further developing the Paris Pact initiative as a rapidly adaptable vehicle driven by demand at the country and regional levels entails fully utilizing the consultative mechanism of the Paris Pact and strengthening its field presence and activities along the key trafficking routes. In this regard, the new initiatives to establish Paris Pact expert advisory networks under the four pillars of the Vienna Declaration and engage such expert networks in Paris Pact operational expert dialogues were presented at the fifteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting and discussed among the Paris Pact partners. They are expected to further leverage the outcomes of the Paris Pact global expert working groups and reinforce linkages between thematic recommendations of the Paris Pact and the operations of the Paris Pact partners, taking into full consideration the emerging situation, operational needs and other support frameworks already in place in different regional and interregional settings along the main opiate trafficking routes from Afghanistan. As underlined by the Paris Pact Coordination Unit at the fifteenth Policy Consultative Group meeting, the operationalization of these new modalities under the consultative mechanism remains fully subject to the availability of additional donor support to the Paris Pact programme.

39. As at the end of 2021, the donors of the Paris Pact programme were the Russian Federation and the United States of America. In the reporting period, the programme actively engaged with partner States and organizations to expand its donor base, calling for additional partners to join in providing donations to further strengthen the collective response of the Paris Pact initiative in the spirit of common and shared responsibility.
