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Report on the meeting of the expert group on data collection held in Vienna from 11 to 13 October 2010

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/12 and decision 53/2, the Expert Group on Data Collection was reconvened in Vienna from 11 to 13 October 2010.

II. Recommendations to be brought to the attention of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

2. At its final meeting, on 13 October 2010, the expert group on data collection considered item 5 of its agenda, entitled "Conclusion and recommendations", and approved the annual report questionnaire for consideration and adoption by the Commission pursuant to Commission resolution 52/12 and decision 53/2. The expert group endorsed the recommendations set forth in the paragraphs below.

3. The expert group recommended that the annual report questionnaire should be reviewed periodically so as to improve its content and form in the light of the comments and considerations reflected in the present report, which has been prepared by the Chair, and to take into account the needs and the challenges of balancing the collection of quantitative and qualitative data and information with the need for a flexible international instrument allowing for national reporting on drug situations and emerging drug trends.

4. In view of the limited capacity of some Member States to generate drug statistics and data and to respond to the annual report questionnaire, the expert group recommended that the Secretariat should assist Member States in developing their data-collection and reporting capacities.



III. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening and duration of the meeting

5. The expert group on data collection met from 11 to 13 October 2010 pursuant to Commission on Narcotics Drugs resolution 52/12 and decision 53/2. The Chair made an opening statement and introduced the provisional agenda and the proposed organization of work (UNODC/CND/EG.1/2010/9).

B. Attendance

6. The meeting was attended by experts and representatives of 34 States Members of the United Nations and intergovernmental bodies.

C. Election of officers

7. At its meeting on 11 October 2010, the expert group confirmed its Bureau as elected at the meeting of the expert group held on 12 January 2010, as follows:

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| <i>Chair</i> | Group of Latin American and Caribbean States | Ulises Canchola Gutiérrez (Mexico) |
| <i>First Vice-Chair</i> | Group of Western European and Other States | Simon Mamouney (Australia) (replacing Louisa Degenhardt, who could not attend the meeting) |
| <i>Rapporteur</i> | Group of African States | Kenjika Linus Ekedede (Nigeria) |

D. Adoption of the agenda

8. At its meeting on 11 October 2010, the expert group adopted its provisional agenda (UNODC/CND/EG.1/2010/9), which read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Finalization of the content and structure of a revised, simple and efficient reporting system.
4. The way forward in improving data-collection and reporting processes.
5. Conclusions and recommendations.
6. Adoption of the report on the meeting of the expert group.

E. Closure of the meeting

9. Closing statements were made by representatives and by the Chair.

IV. Deliberations

A. Finalization of the content and structure of the revised draft annual report questionnaire

10. The expert group considered under item 3 of its agenda the following documentation:

(a) Revised draft annual report questionnaire: Part One. Legislative and institutional framework (UNODC/CND/EG.1/2010/10);

(b) Revised draft annual report questionnaire: Part Two. Comprehensive approach to drug demand and supply reduction (UNODC/CND/EG.1/2010/11);

(c) Revised draft annual report questionnaire: Part Three. Extent and patterns of and trends in drug use (UNODC/CND/EG.1/2010/12);

(d) Revised draft annual report questionnaire: Part Four. Extent and patterns of and trends in drug cultivation, manufacture and trafficking (UNODC/CND/EG.1/2010/13).

11. The experts reviewed the revised draft annual report questionnaire, which had been prepared on the basis of the procedure established in Commission decision 53/2. All the comments and proposals submitted by the experts were duly considered and discussed. The experts stressed that the review of the annual report questionnaire should be considered an ongoing process.

12. In the course of the deliberations, different challenges were identified, including: (a) the importance of reporting quantifiable and measurable data; (b) the importance of reporting in compliance with the legally binding instruments while combating new trends in drug trafficking; (c) the need to simplify the questionnaire while still enabling the reporting of harmonized and comparable data; and (d) the different levels of reporting capacity of Member States.

13. Some of the participating experts considered that qualitative reporting based on expert perceptions on trends was less reliable than reporting based on surveys and could lead to erroneous interpretations and conclusions. Therefore, reporting based on expert opinions and perceptions should be limited in the revised annual report questionnaire. In the same connection, one expert considered that the questions in part three needed to be reordered. Other experts considered that, given the limited capacity of some Member States to generate data and the periodicity with which data were generated in other countries, there should be provision in the questionnaire allowing for reporting on expert opinions and perceptions on trends. Since reordering the questions would also result in considerable restructuring of the entire questionnaire, the order of the questions in part three remained unchanged. Still, it was considered important to ask for detailed information on the rationale supporting the answers to the questions in part three.

14. One expert considered that the classes and types of drugs in the draft questionnaire were not consistent with the international drug control conventions and that Member States might find the classification or mention of specific drug types confusing. However, other experts considered that the terminology in the draft annual report questionnaire regarding classes and types of drugs was more

functional and better reflected the need to capture specific national and regional drug trends. Therefore, the heading “Class and type of drugs”, as well as the examples given, remained unchanged.

B. The way forward

15. The experts were of the view that the submission of and reporting on the annual report questionnaire by Member States would be annual.

16. A number of experts were of the view that information contained in some reports prepared by the Secretariat (e.g. the *World Drug Report*), when based only on qualitative data provided by States, should be reported separately, or in a manner or format that distinguished it from information based on quantitative data. Other experts recognized the need for reporting qualitative data in order to provide more contextual information, and to take into account the difficulties faced by the Secretariat to monitor the drug situation with the limited information provided by Member States with less capacity to generate data on drugs.

V. Approval of the revised annual report questionnaire

17. At its final meeting, on 13 October 2011, the expert group approved by consensus the revised annual report questionnaire, as amended in the course of the meeting, as well as the recommendations contained in section II above. Following the approval of the revised annual report questionnaire, the expert from China made a statement stressing that it would be difficult for his Government to collect and report on the data requested therein. Furthermore, he indicated that in some cases it would not be possible to report either estimates or the method used to provide such information. Nevertheless, he reiterated the willingness of his Government to do its utmost to provide answers to the questionnaire.

18. The expert group requested the Chair to prepare the present report on its proceedings.
