

20 November 2016

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**Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic  
and Related Matters in the Near and  
Middle East****Fifty-first session**

Riyadh, 20-24 November 2016

Agenda item 9

**Adoption of the report****Draft report***Rapporteur:* Shri Rohit Sharma (India)**Addendum****Current situation with respect to regional and subregional  
cooperation**

1. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 20 November 2016, the Subcommission considered item 3 of its agenda, entitled "Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation". For its consideration of the item, the Subcommission had before it: (a) Note by the Secretariat on statistics on drug trafficking trends in the Near and Middle East and South, West and Central Asia (UNODC/SUBCOM/52/2); and (b) Report of the Secretariat on the current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation (UNODC/SUBCOM/51/3). In addition, national country reports were submitted by Bahrain, Egypt, India, Lebanon, Qatar and Turkey (UNODC/SUBCOM/51/CRP.2-7).

2. Representatives of UNODC made presentations on regional trends and on UNODC activities in countries in the region, including the global programme on Building Effective Networks against Transnational Organized Crime (BENATOC). Statements were made by the representatives of India, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey. The GCC Criminal Information Center to Combat Drugs (GCC-CICCD) also made a statement.

3. Delegations stressed the importance of regional and international cooperation among countries and organizations and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided by UNODC to the region. Several speakers referred to the staggering size of the illicit financial flows generated by transnational organized crime, including the proceedings from illicit drug trafficking, that by far exceeded the budget of law

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



enforcement agencies. This called for increased cooperation and coordination among countries in the region in order to effectively combat these phenomena.

4. Several speakers stressed the need to establish direct communications among national anti-drug entities in the region for exchange of information, as well as the importance of developing standardized procedures, working methods and operational modalities to be more effective in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

5. Several delegations reported on operations conducted against drug trafficking in their respective countries, on the posting of drug liaison officers in drug producing and transit countries along the trafficking routes, and on seizures of illicit drugs. One delegation reported on recent cases of detection of illicit trafficking of tramadol and other pharmaceutical preparations.

6. Reference was made by some speakers to the use of the Internet and darknet for drug trafficking. In this connection, the use of formal channels and processes for mutual legal assistance among countries was not always conducive to prompt exchange of information and investigations. Alternatives should be envisaged for a speedier exchange of data among law enforcement officers, also in cooperation with private server providers. The use of digital currency (Bitcoin) by drug traffickers was also mentioned as a new challenge to tracking the financial flows related to drug trafficking.

7. Reference was also made by some speakers to the increase in the manufacture of and trafficking in Captagon in the region, also as a consequence of political instability. The growing seizures of this substance by law enforcement agencies, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, was a result of successful international cooperation. Some speakers referred to the need to better control the licit production of precursor chemicals in order to prevent their diversion, including by requesting chemical industries to register with narcotics control entities, or analysing bills of lading of end users.

8. Some speakers referred to the growing importance of the southern, maritime trafficking route, in addition to the Balkan and northern routes. Other emerging routes were through the Mediterranean and Black seas. In relation to maritime routes, one speaker indicated that drug traffickers were taking advantage of the lack of stringent enforcement on the high seas due to the ambiguities in the related United Nations convention as regards the ability to board vessels and make seizures, prosecution and trials. Another issue was the large scale registration of vessels by flag States of convenience. References were made to member States benefiting from existing UNODC global programmes as the maritime control programme and the container control programme.

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