



Administrative Committee on Coordination

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CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMME AND OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS (CCPOQ)

REPORT OF THE ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON DRUG CONTROL AT ITS FIFTH SESSION

(Vienna, 29 September-1 October 1997)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The fifth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control was held at the Vienna International Centre from 29 September to 1 October 1997. The agenda is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II. The agenda was adopted, with the addition, under the item "Other business", of the sub-item "Resource book on demand".

2. Addressing the meeting on the last day, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) indicated his intention to make full use of the wealth of expertise available in the United Nations system since it was crucial that the different agencies cooperate with and support each other. He also felt that such cooperation should be demonstrated to member States, and that success stories should be widely disseminated. He noted that there had been a tendency to focus on law enforcement and treatment rather than prevention, and that UNDCP favoured a balanced approach that gave adequate priority to the development of strategies for promoting the prevention of drug abuse throughout the world.

I. MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION

3. The Subcommittee proposed that Mr. Gale Day (UNDCP) serve as Chairman and Ms. Susan Mlango (UNDCP) as Secretary for the period 1998-1999.

4. The Subcommittee agreed to draft a joint ACC statement to be submitted to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related matters, to be held in June 1998; the draft would be submitted for clearance by ACC at its first session in 1998.

5. The Subcommittee wished to recommend to ACC that documentation for ACC and its subsidiary bodies be transmitted electronically, specifically on the optical disc system.

6. The Subcommittee wished to draw the attention of ACC to the low attendance at its meetings, and especially to the absence of key partners in the fight against drug abuse.

II. WORK OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

A. Actions taken and decisions adopted by the Subcommittee

7. In keeping with established procedures for ACC subsidiary bodies, the Subcommittee selected a Chairman and Secretary for the period 1998-1999, to be proposed to ACC.

8. The Subcommittee decided that interested agencies would participate in events to be organized in connection with the special session of the General Assembly on drug control to be held in June 1998.

9. The Subcommittee decided to review the applicability of the System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control (SWAP) to field level operations, and requested UNDCP to carry out an external evaluation of the SWAP process in 1998.

B. Summary of discussion

10. In welcoming the participants, the Director of the UNDCP Division for Operations and External Relations explained that the Chairman of the Subcommittee had been reassigned to the UNDCP office in Egypt, and that the elections that were due should take place immediately. It was clarified that that constituted an ad hoc arrangement for the current meeting and a recommendation of the Subcommittee for the coming two years.

1. Global overview of the situation regarding the illicit production of, trafficking in and demand for drugs

11. In presenting the item, the UNDCP Senior Research Coordinator introduced the World Drug Report, which had been released earlier in the year. He noted that it was an important step forward in presenting the type of information that was available on drug production, trafficking and abuse, and explained the difficulties experienced in aggregating statistics and balancing data obtained from various sources. Feedback had been received so far only from the popular press, which had quoted such aggregated figures. He presented some of the more interesting figures for the estimated cultivation, seizures and abuse as contained in the Report.

12. Discussion followed on the reliability of such data and their sources. It was further mentioned that work had already commenced on the second version of the Report, which was envisaged as a biennial publication, and for which assistance would be sought from other agencies.

2. Overview of country-level inter-agency cooperation in drug control

13. In view of the abundance of inter-agency activities at the field level, the Secretariat had chosen to present a "success story" from one country, Viet Nam, followed by a more general discussion. The former UNDCP representative in Viet Nam said that coordination was extremely important in a country where many United Nations agencies and bilateral donors, as well as over a hundred non-governmental organizations, were active. Viet Nam, he said, was of "middle importance" as far as the drug situation was concerned: it was affected by cultivation, trafficking and abuse but not on a large scale. He told the meeting how with the active support of the resident coordinator in that country it had been possible to form an active thematic group on drugs, including non-governmental organizations. A useful activity stemming from the thematic

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group had been a field visit to a UNDCP alternative development project site by all the heads of the United Nations agencies in the country, an initiative that had resulted in several interventions by other agencies in related areas, such as health and education, to promote sustainable development in the project zone. He also pointed to the importance of a United Nations system newsletter at the country level for promoting system solidarity.

14. In the ensuing discussion, it was agreed that such joint activities depended greatly on the individuals involved, especially the resident coordinator. It was stressed that the success of the Viet Nam experience, from which lessons could be drawn but which could not necessarily be replicated in other countries in exactly the same way, benefited from a set of circumstances conducive to such collaboration. It was important to publicize such activities.

3. Conclusions and decisions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fortieth session

15. In reporting on the outcome of the last session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Secretary of the Commission explained that it had met in regular session and as preparatory body for the 1998 special session of the General Assembly. Since its work in the latter function would be covered under a separate agenda item (see paras. 16-20 below), he restricted his remarks to the regular session and briefed the meeting on the resolutions involving action by agencies other than UNDCP.

4. Preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on drug control

16. The Chief of the UNDCP Legal Affairs Section presented the meeting with a timetable of preparatory meetings leading up to the special session, which was scheduled for 8 to 10 June 1998. She explained that there would be a political declaration and a declaration on the guiding principles of drug demand reduction, the latter currently being negotiated. It was not yet fully clear how member States would handle the other topics proposed for the agenda: stimulants, precursors, alternative development, judicial cooperation and money laundering, but it was anticipated that action plans would be drawn up on each of them during the preparatory phase.

17. As to parallel events during the special session, it was mentioned that space for meetings and exhibits had been reserved, and details were being elaborated on how they would be made available to interested representatives of civil society and for United Nations system use.

18. It was decided that United Nations system agencies would prepare a series of events based on the plans of action in the SWAP. Several panel discussions had already taken place or were planned in New York along the lines of which five events could be scheduled at the time of the special session, which would provide an opportunity to demonstrate inter-agency cooperation to Member States. Several topics were suggested, and it was agreed that the list would be finalized by correspondence with the focal points and those present at the

meeting by the beginning of November, after consultation with non-governmental organizations where needed.

19. The need to attract the media to side events of the special session was stressed. It was therefore suggested that a two-page bullet-style background pamphlet be prepared to advertise inter-agency events.

20. With regard to the joint ACC statement to the special session, the Subcommittee agreed on a list of topics and themes to be included. It was agreed that UNDCP would prepare an initial draft on the basis of the Subcommittee's conclusions and circulate it within two months to the focal points and those present for comments. Depending on the comments received, it would be determined whether the circulation of a revised draft would be necessary. The final version would be submitted to the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions in March 1998 and then via the Organizational Committee to ACC for approval.

5. Review of progress on the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control

21. The Chairman introduced the item by giving a résumé of the history of the evolution of the SWAP since its creation in the late 1980s. Nine subsectoral plans of action were now in place, and it was time, after two years of the new SWAP (prepared with the revised methodology adopted in 1995 when SWAP was entrusted to the Subcommittee), to take stock of the situation, especially in light of the United Nations reforms and the introduction of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework exercise. In that context, UNDCP offered to have the SWAP process evaluated in 1998. A simple monitoring form to be completed by the plans of action task forces had also been drafted by the secretariat.

22. A lively discussion ensued from which a consensus emerged that SWAP was an important tool for retaining and improving inter-agency collaboration in drug control activities, but that it needed to be more realistic in terms of field operations so as to ensure that it acted to guide the programming process. While the activities within the plans of action were to a considerable extent being carried out, it was clear that the SWAP merely reflected those activities rather than influenced them. There was also consensus that the first six plans of action should be updated, and a suggestion was made that the activities be grouped according to the objectives to facilitate monitoring. It was also suggested that the SWAP could be further enhanced by establishing priorities within it.

23. The following strategy was adopted:

(a) The SWAP process would be evaluated, with prior consultation with Subcommittee members on the terms of reference, and the results would be made available to the Subcommittee at its sixth session;

(b) The applicability of existing plans of action would be checked by UNDCP with selected field duty stations;

(c) The monitoring questionnaire would be revised by the secretariat according to comments received and sent to task forces for completion by the end of November;

(d) The secretariat would report to the Committee on Narcotic Drugs in 1998 on the inclusion of the three new plans of action, and would indicate that an evaluation was being carried out.

6. Possible countermeasures to stimulant abuse

24. The UNDCP Senior Research Coordinator gave a concise overview of the situation with regard to amphetamine-type stimulant abuse (various manufactured drugs with multiple and substitutional, controlled and uncontrolled precursors that may or may not have originated or derived from the licit market are covered by that term). He mentioned that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had mandated a study of the rapidly evolving problem, and that two expert group meetings had already been held on the subject. As a result of an inter-sessional meeting of the Commission, a short action plan had been agreed for presentation at the special session of the General Assembly.

25. He outlined four problem areas that required countermeasures:

(a) Awareness of what the drugs and their effects were (taking into account the fact that negative connotations, such as those attached to heroin and cocaine, were largely absent in the case of stimulants);

(b) Information on their availability, ingredients and chemical processes was abundant and easily accessible on the Internet;

(c) Supply was local, often small-scale and virtually uncontrollable;

(d) Control measures, as applied to other drugs, did not work, since the scheduling of new substances took longer than the emergence of still newer drugs.

26. Recognizing the great difficulties involved in the control of those substances, the participants agreed that it was necessary for the agencies to work together, each from its own perspective, to foster innovative, multidisciplinary approaches to the problem.

7. Alternative development: an analysis of experience and prospects for the future

27. In introducing the item, the UNDCP alternative development adviser mentioned that UNDCP had been working in that area for 25 years, and that the consolidation of its experience had resulted in the current definition and application of alternative development in areas of illicit cultivation. To be successful, alternative development interventions needed to be focused, include local beneficiary groups in project design and be sustainable. Although UNDCP concentrated on the areas of illicit crop cultivation, other agencies were

encouraged to assist in the general development of neighbouring remote rural areas in order to discourage relocation of illicit activities. The adviser cited examples of successful and promising projects in Bolivia, Pakistan and Thailand, pointing out that up to 10 years were needed to produce definitive results and sustainability. She also cited examples of effective collaboration with other United Nations agencies in specific projects.

28. It was agreed that best practices should be documented, analysed and disseminated, and that inter-agency cooperation needed to be improved at the project level.

8. Guiding principles of demand reduction

29. The meeting had before it a working paper that was to be further negotiated at an intergovernmental meeting to be held in October 1997 at Vienna. It contained, paragraph by paragraph, the original text, the comments received from Governments and organizations, and a suggested alternative text. In introducing the item, the UNDCP Interregional Adviser on demand reduction said that the reaction of member States was not yet known since many who would attend the meeting had not submitted their comments previously.

30. The importance of the guiding principles was stressed by the participants, who confirmed the strong support of the agencies for it and renewed their commitment to the process. Specific mention of school education programmes was requested to be reinserted. It was mentioned by several agencies that the invitation to the meeting had been confusing.

9. Inter-agency cooperation on drugs and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

31. The representative of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) drew attention to the impact of drug abuse on risk and vulnerability for HIV transmission. The similarity between the types of actions needed to fight HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, and the resulting similarities of the two programmes on coordination in the United Nations system were also elaborated. Various examples were provided by the participants on the correlation of drug abuse and HIV prevalence. It was therefore crucial to strengthen inter-agency coordination of programming and information exchange. In addition, dissemination of best practices was encouraged.

10. Other business

(a) Theme for the 1999 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

32. After considerable discussion, the Subcommittee agreed that "Music" was a potential theme for 1999. It was evident, however, that help was needed to focus the wording suitably. The secretariat would therefore seek advice and

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circulate its findings to the Subcommittee so that the theme could be clarified at the next meeting, when the Subcommittee would also examine a possible connection between the 1999 theme and the one to be selected for the millennium celebration in 2000.

(b) Dates and venue for the sixth session

33. The Subcommittee agreed to meet from 14 to 16 September 1998. The representative of FAO extended an invitation, subject to confirmation, to hold the meeting in Rome. The Subcommittee also agreed to hold an informal meeting at the time of the forty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to be held in March 1998 at Vienna.

(c) Provisional agenda for the sixth session

34. The Subcommittee approved the provisional agenda for its sixth session, as attached in annex III. In that connection, the Subcommittee recommended that agencies encourage operational staff to attend, given the emphasis on operational matters. Agencies were also invited to bring reports on selected activities for distribution at the sixth session. The secretariat was requested to invite the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction to make a presentation on its activities at the session.

(d) Adoption of the report of the fifth session

35. The Subcommittee adopted the draft report contained herein on its fifth session. The participants expressed their unanimous appreciation to the secretariat for preparing and conducting the meeting.

(e) Resource book on demand reduction: status report

36. The UNDCP Interregional Adviser briefed the meeting on the status of the revision of the 1979 resource book on measures to reduce illicit demand for drugs, which was being prepared as a series of monographs by a number of teams, including a Government, a United Nations agency and a research institution. The exercise was intended to identify and expand on the principles of demand reduction, illustrate best practices and be a reference guide to policy makers. The Adviser mentioned that an error in a mailing list, which had caused some agencies not to be informed of developments, had now been rectified and new partners were being sought.

37. Some concern was voiced about how the series would convey coherent policy if the individual papers were prepared by different teams. It was necessary to safeguard the global and comprehensive nature of the whole book. The Subcommittee agreed that the United Nations needed to ensure close coordination of the process, and asked UNDCP to prepare a description of how the process was envisaged for comment by the Subcommittee at the earliest possible occasion.

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38. The Subcommittee was able to take advantage of a presentation by Judge Jeffrey Tauber on "drug courts" - an innovative approach in the United States of America to the treatment of drug offenders.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Global overview of the situation regarding the illicit production of, trafficking in and demand for drugs.
3. Overview of country-level inter-agency cooperation in drug control.
4. Conclusions and decisions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fortieth session of relevance to the United Nations system.
5. Preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on drug control.
6. Review of progress on the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control:
 - (a) Progress on plans of action;
 - (b) Fund-raising initiatives;
 - (c) Monitoring and evaluation.
7. Possible countermeasures to stimulant abuse.
8. Alternative development: an analysis of experience and prospects for the future.
9. Guiding principles of demand reduction: status report.
10. Inter-agency cooperation on drugs and HIV/AIDS.
11. Other business:
 - (a) Theme for the 1999 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking;
 - (b) Dates and venue for the sixth session;
 - (c) Provisional agenda for the sixth session;
 - (d) Adoption of the report of the fifth session;
 - (e) Resource book on demand reduction.

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

United Nations International Drug Control Programme	Mr. Gale Day (Chairman) Ms. Susan Mlango (Secretary) Mr. Christian Kornevall Mr. Mathieu Mounikou
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and United Nations Focal Point for Tobacco or Health	Mr. Raúl Uranga
United Nations Development Programme	Mr. David Smith
United Nations Interregional Crime and Research Institute	Ms. Maria Elena Andreotti
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division	Mr. Alfredo Nunzi
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Mr. John Latham
International Labour Organization	Mr. Behrouz Shahandeh
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Ms. Sonia Bahri
Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Mr. Werasit Sittitrai
Office for Outer Space Affairs	Mr. Petr Lala Mr. Sergio Camacho Mr. Hubert George
World Health Organization	Mr. Jukka Sailas

* * *

UNDCP resource persons

Ms. Sumru Noyan
Mr. Paulsen Bailey
Ms. Kit Volz
Ms. Cindy Fazey
Mr. Sandeep Chawla
Ms. Flavia Pansieri
Mr. Jørn Kristensen
Ms. Doris Buddenberg

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Annex III

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SIXTH SESSION

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on drug control.
3. Presentation by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addictions.*
4. Operationalization of inter-agency cooperation in drug control.
5. Alternative development.
6. System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control: review of evaluation.
7. Impact of United Nations system reform.
8. Other business:
 - (a) Themes for the International Day against Drug Abuse and Trafficking in 1999 and 2000;
 - (b) Dates and venue for the seventh session;
 - (c) Provisional agenda for the seventh session;
 - (d) Adoption of the report on the sixth session.

* To be confirmed.