ACC Guidance Note for United Nations System Activities To Counter the World Drug Problem

Approved on behalf of ACC by the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) at its First Regular Session of 2001, Vienna, 26-27 February 2001
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INTRODUCTION

“All countries are affected by the devastating consequences of drug abuse and illicit trafficking: adverse effects on health; the upsurge in crime, violence and corruption; the draining of human, natural and financial resources that might otherwise be used for social and economic development; the destruction of individuals, families and communities; and the undermining of political, cultural, social and economic structures.”

BACKGROUND

1. Since its inception, the United Nations has addressed the issue of illicit drugs. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) was established in 1946 as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Three Conventions adopted by the international community are currently in force: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) (which consolidated the various previous conventions) and its amending Protocol (1972), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988). Implementation of these Conventions is monitored by the International Narcotics Control Board, which was established by the 1961 Convention.

2. In 1987, the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking adopted a Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline for Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control. Subsequently, at its seventeenth special session, the General Assembly adopted a Global Programme of Action in 1990.

3. Also in 1990, the General Assembly decided to streamline the Organization’s capacity to counter the world drug problem by merging the three then existing entities into one United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

4. In the context of the reform process, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance for the various entities of working together to enhance the visibility and credibility of the United Nations, as well as to optimize limited resources. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is a key component of United Nations reform at the country level. It is the planning framework for operations of the UN system and provides the foundation for the preparation by the various participants of a complementary set of programmes and projects. The UNDAF consists of common objectives and strategies of cooperation, a programme resources framework and proposals for follow-up, monitoring and evaluation, with common objectives and time frames which serve as the basis for the individual country programmes. The General Assembly has emphasized the need to ensure the full participation and direct involvement of governments and all parts of the United Nations system in the UNDAF process. It is also the framework for consolidated follow-up at the country level to recent international conferences and summits, including the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, which was devoted to countering the world drug problem.

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1 Declaration on the guiding principles of drug demand reduction, GA resolution S-20/3
5. The UNDAF is based on a Common Country Assessment (CCA) for which core indicators have been provided to gather baseline data. The drug-related indicators included in the guidelines for the preparation of CCA for application in all countries are:

- area under illegal cultivation of coca, opium poppy and cannabis;
- seizures of illicit drugs; and
- prevalence of drug abuse.

These are to be augmented by more detailed thematic indicators as the situation demands. The reform process has also advocated the establishment of country team thematic groups on various issues of importance, including illicit drug issues. These provide a vehicle for identifying, planning and developing joint and complementary initiatives.

6. At the 20th special session of the General Assembly, international consensus was confirmed as to the necessity of countering all aspects of the drug problem on all fronts simultaneously. On that occasion, the Assembly also “call(ed) upon the United Nations system, and invite(d) the international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the regional development banks, to include action against the world drug problem in their programmes.”

7. Based on a report by a High-level Expert Group to Review the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and to Strengthen the United Nations Machinery for Drug Control, and on the recommendation of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/30 recommended “that the Administrative Committee on Coordination ensure that drug issues be considered in the formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework”.

8. Most recently, in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the member States resolved to redouble their efforts to implement their commitment to counter the world drug problem.

SCOPE

9. This Guidance Note is intended primarily for use by Resident Coordinators and entities of the United Nations system, at their Headquarters and field offices, during policy-making processes and particularly during all stages of operational activities. However, the spirit of this Note reaches out to a myriad of partners within civil society. UN organizations are therefore encouraged to enlist the support of their own non-governmental partners in furthering the assistance rendered to Member States.

10. Organizations are hereby called upon to keep their interventions within the terms of the international conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and the mandates of the intergovernmental bodies, such as the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

11. Within the terms of this Note, it is understood that all overriding standards adopted by the United Nations remain valid and are to be respected. This refers particularly to human rights and gender considerations, which are to be taken into account at all times.

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2 A/RES/55/2
OBJECTIVES

12. The overriding aim is to help Governments achieve their objectives as committed at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and outlined below, bearing in mind other related mandates and national and international priorities. For greater detail, the Declarations and Measures adopted at the special session should be consulted\(^3\). Specifically:

1. **Demand Reduction**

13. To help Member States achieve their objectives of developing new or enhanced demand reduction strategies and programmes by 2003 in line with the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and achieving significant results in demand reduction by 2008. The subsequent Action Plan on the Implementation of the Declaration states that “Organizations in the United Nations system\(^4\), other international organizations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations are invited to provide support to Member States in implementing the Action Plan, according to their available resources, specific mandates and the different roles that they are to play in achieving the goals set out in the Declaration”.

14. Action required of the UN system and other partners is to provide assistance to those States requesting it and to facilitate the sharing of information on best strategies. To this end, a set of programming priorities has been identified:

! Provide advice and technical assistance to Member States on:

- the establishment of national systems for monitoring drug abuse;
- the development and implementation of national demand reduction strategies, which should cover all areas of prevention, from discouraging initial use to reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse;
- the development of capacities within the criminal justice system for assisting drug abusers’ reintegration into society.

! Share information on best strategies. The identification of best strategies will concentrate on:

- drug abuse prevention among youth;
- social mobilization for prevention, including prevention at the workplace;
- drug-related HIV/AIDS; and
- treatment and rehabilitation.

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\(^3\) GA/S-20/2, 3 and 4 (http://www.unodc.org/adhoc/gass/)

\(^4\) This may include, but is not restricted to, UNDCP, UNDP, UNAIDS, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, and WHO, as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank
2. Measures to Enhance International Cooperation to Counter the World Drug Problem

a) Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)

15. To help Member States achieve their objectives of establishing or strengthening, by 2003, national legislation and programmes giving effect to the Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and their Precursors through:

- raising awareness of the problems of ATS,
- reducing demand for illicit ATS,
- providing accurate information on ATS,
- limiting the supply of ATS,
- strengthening the control system for ATS and their precursors.

b) Precursors

16. To help Member States achieve their objectives of eliminating or reducing significantly the illicit manufacture, marketing and trafficking of psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs, by 2008, with particular attention being given to:

- prevention, through legislation and national control systems, information exchange and data collection, of illicit manufacture, import, export, distribution and diversion of precursors used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances;
- increasing international cooperation in precursor control;
- measures to control unscheduled substitute chemicals.

c) Judicial Cooperation

17. To help Member States review and, where appropriate, strengthen, by 2003, the implementation of the Measures to Promote Judicial Cooperation in:

- extradition,
- mutual legal assistance,
- transfer of proceedings,
- controlled delivery,
- illicit traffic by sea,
- complementary measures such as protection of judicial and law enforcement personnel and witnesses, new investigative techniques, harmonization and simplification of procedures, training of criminal justice personnel.
d) Money Laundering

18. To provide training, advice and technical assistance to Member States to help them achieve their objectives to adopt, by 2003, national money laundering legislation and programmes in accordance with 1988 Convention and the measures adopted on Countering Money-Laundering:

- Establish legislative framework to criminalize money-laundering;
- Establish an effective financial and regulatory regime to deny criminals and their illicit funds access to national and international financial systems;
- Implement law enforcement measures to provide tools for effective detection, investigation, prosecution and conviction of criminals engaging in money-laundering, extradition procedures, and information-sharing mechanisms.

e) Crop Eradication and Alternative Development

19. To help Member States achieve their objectives to eliminate or reduce significantly the illicit cultivation of the coca bush, opium poppy and the cannabis plant by 2008 through the development of strategies and implementation of the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development, recognizing the need for:

- a balanced approach to confront high levels of illicit cultivation;
- strengthened international cooperation for alternative development;
- improved and innovative approaches to alternative development;
- enhanced monitoring, evaluation and information-sharing;
- law enforcement in controlling illicit crops.

The Action Plan recognizes that the problem of the illicit production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is often related to development problems and that those links require, within the context of shared responsibility, close cooperation among States, the competent organs of the United Nations system, in particular UNDCP, regional bodies and international financial institutions, within their areas of competence.
ACTION

20. Action needs to be taken on two levels: at the policy and advocacy level of Headquarters and at the country level for the detailed planning of activities in the context of national priorities. Furthermore, cooperation among countries of a region needs to be encouraged so that common approaches to combating drug production, trafficking and cross-border air and ground crop surveillance are agreed upon.

21. In line with the ACC Statement to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly\(^5\), by which the executive heads committed their funds, programmes and agencies to the principles of the international response to the drug problem, relationships should be identified and specific actions undertaken to counter drug-related problems together with other cross-cutting developmental priorities, such as: gender equality, poverty alleviation, education and training, youth, health, HIV/AIDS, population and life-skills training, workplace and employment, environmental protection, organized crime, corruption, governance, peace-building and refugees.

22. Given these inter-linkages between the drug problem and more general socio-economic development problems, as well as other health issues, all agencies, funds and programmes should address and support anti-drug activities in pursuit of the objectives adopted at the special session, while at the same time pursuing their own mandated objectives. In this context particularly, the activities of agencies addressing the negative health effects of alcohol and tobacco are to be taken into account.

23. Consideration of illicit drug-related issues should be mainstreamed into the planning processes of all agencies, at both the headquarters and country levels. The following modalities may be considered:

1. the insertion of a drug component into ongoing or planned activities;
2. formulation of development activities in support of ongoing or planned drug control activities;
3. joint projects planned and formulated by two or more agencies to address their individual concerns simultaneously;
4. joint planning by two or more agencies of parallel or complementary activities.

\(^5\) A/S-20/3
AREAS FOR COOPERATION

At the global, regional and national levels:

! **Policy development**

24. In contacts with their own government counterparts, agencies should ensure that drug issues are taken into consideration as appropriate to facilitate and ensure consistency of national policies in various thematic areas. The governing bodies of the UN funds, programmes and agencies similarly need to be informed of the drug-related implications of their actions.

! **Research**

25. Agencies with technical expertise should foster and support scientific research activities which are conducive to more effective demand reduction strategies, on topics related to the aetiology and development of drug related problems, health, social and economic costs of drug abuse, cost-effectiveness of interventions and policies and epidemiology of drug abuse. The use of common methods and indicators should be encouraged in order to facilitate cross-national comparisons and the application of knowledge gained internationally.

! **Advocacy**

26. In accordance with the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General, there is a need for the United Nations system to speak with one voice and to give clear messages to the outside world. Within the scope of their specific mandates and their different roles, all agencies should therefore endeavour to stress the need to adopt a balanced approach to countering the drug problem, addressing both the supply and demand aspects, and “to promote a society free of drug abuse, especially by emphasizing and facilitating healthy, productive and fulfilling alternatives to the consumption of illicit drugs, which must not become accepted as a way of life”.

27. The pooling of resources, such as information/expertise/funds, for joint publications is an economical and visible undertaking which will enhance the corporate image of the UN system. Similarly, websites with links and common or joint pages could be produced.

! **Needs assessment**

28. While undertaking needs assessments within their own areas of competence, agencies should include drug-related indicators to ascertain the nature and magnitude of drug abuse and drug-related problems in the project area/target population, taking into account the feasibility of implementing programmes. As a minimum, the core drug-related indicators are to be considered in the preparation of all CCAs and UNDAFs.

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6 Political Declaration, A/S-20/2
29. All information on the drug issue acquired by agencies should be made readily available to other agencies of the system as well as to governments and non-governmental organizations as appropriate. Information sharing to ensure awareness of the activities of all agencies is essential at the country level. Efforts should be pursued to link related websites.

30. Based on needs assessments and available information, thematic groups on drugs or other inter-agency coordination machinery at the country level should be able to identify activities which lend themselves to a collaborative effort. Project formulation is best undertaken jointly by interested agencies in order to ensure inclusion of those elements important to each. How each activity is implemented, monitored and evaluated will depend on the modality chosen and on the lead agency’s working methods.

31. While the situation varies considerably between countries, no place is immune to the threat of a drug problem. Rapid socio-economic changes, urbanization and a large income gap are examples of broader issues which relate to drug problems. Taking the drug situation into account is therefore always a valid consideration. In most countries combinations of the following variables are found in different degrees:

- the existence of illicit production of drugs;
- the presence of major drug abuse problems, including health related consequences;
- location on major trafficking routes;
- high potential for increased drug abuse;
- the existence of injecting drug use.

32. The intensity of activity to counter the problem will therefore vary similarly from country to country. However, in order to assess the situation and determine the need for action, the following course of action is to be promoted in all countries.

- A thematic group on illicit drugs should be set up by the Resident Coordinator. This will facilitate the adoption of a common understanding of the problem in the country, as well as the identification, planning and development of joint and complementary interventions;

- Consideration of the drug situation should be integrated in the work of other inter-agency coordination groups, such as those on HIV/AIDS and rural development/poverty alleviation;

- Illicit drug cultivation, production, trafficking and money laundering must be taken into account and included in CCA and UNDAF processes in all countries. In addition, prevention and treatment of substance abuse and related issues such as HIV/AIDS must be included. For this purpose, a detailed list of thematic indicators on drug issues will be made available from which the country team can select those relevant to the specific country situation;

- There must be wide-based sharing of experiences and interaction among the UN agencies.

33. Alternative development activities need to adopt a community participatory approach so as to ensure sustainability. The impact of alternative development strategies on vulnerable populations needs to be monitored in terms of, *inter alia*, changes in income, cultivation patterns, crime, use of child labour, and access to health and social services.
MONITORING

34. Existing reporting modalities should be utilized so as to avoid duplication.

There must be periodic reporting on indicators:

- The drug situation must be included in the mid-term review of the UNDAF;
- Drug-related activities must be included in the preparation and review of the Work Plan and Annual Report of the Resident Coordinator;
- UN and NGO activities at the country level should be reflected in the national reporting to CND through UNDCP on implementation of the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly;
- The UN system is hereby encouraged to support the timely completion of the country-level Annual Reports Questionnaire.

35. UNDCP will maintain the overview of implementation on the basis of information reported to it that is derived from the above sources and keep the network of focal points informed.