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**Open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development**

Vienna, 2-4 July 2008

**Report on the meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development, held in Vienna from 2 to 4 July 2008**

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## **I. Significant and measurable results in international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development**

1. At its 1st meeting, on 2 July 2008, the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development considered agenda item 3, entitled “Significant and measurable results in international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development”.

2. For its consideration of the item, the working group had before it the following:

(a) Note by the Secretariat on the results attained by Member States in achieving the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the limitations and problems encountered and the way forward: international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development (UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/2);

(b) Fifth report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem (E/CN.7/2008/2);

(c) Fifth report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem: Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development (E/CN.7/2008/2/Add.2);

(d) Report of the Executive Director on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (E/CN.7/2008/8);

(e) Report of the Executive Director on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (E/CN.7/2007/7);

(f) Complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (E/CN.7/2008/CRP.1-9);

(g) “Beyond 2008”: contribution of non-governmental organizations to the implementation of the Political Declaration and Action Plans adopted by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.7/2008/CRP.12);

(h) Report of the International Narcotics Control Board pursuant to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.7/2008/CRP.16);

(i) “Making drug control ‘fit for purpose’: Building on the UNGASS decade”; report by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as a contribution to the review of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.7/2008/CRP.17).

3. An introductory statement was made by the Secretariat. Statements were made by the representatives of Bolivia, Peru, France, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, China, Algeria, Morocco, the Netherlands, Colombia, Thailand, Afghanistan, Australia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Indonesia, the United States of America, the Russian Federation and Ecuador. A statement was also made by the observer for the European Commission.

## **Deliberations**

4. Several speakers reported on their achievements in reducing the cultivation of illicit drug crops in their countries and shared experiences and best practices in that regard.

5. Many speakers acknowledged the positive results achieved in the Golden Triangle over the past 10 years. However, several speakers also stressed that it was essential for the international community to pay further attention to that area. In particular, poverty was mentioned by some speakers as a root cause leading to the cultivation of illicit drug crops and as a factor that could undermine the progress achieved to date. Proactive and preventive alternative development strategies should be implemented to reduce the risk of new areas coming under illicit drug crop cultivation, workers migrating and illicit drug crops being displaced.

6. A number of speakers recognized the positive impact that international and regional cooperation had had in reducing the cultivation of illicit drug crops and providing opportunities for alternative development.

7. Some speakers expressed their appreciation for the cooperation their States were receiving from UNODC. In that connection, a number of speakers emphasized the importance of providing ongoing support to Member States in their efforts to address illicit drug crop cultivation through alternative development, of Governments remaining politically and financially committed and of international organizations providing further assistance.

8. Several speakers informed the working group of experiences gained by their Governments in alternative development programmes and highlighted the necessity of considering humanitarian issues and respecting basic human rights when implementing such programmes.

9. A number of speakers emphasized that alternative development programmes should be included in national development strategies, taking into account social, cultural, economic, political, educational and environmental aspects. In that regard, the important role of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the regional development banks was emphasized.

10. Several speakers emphasized the importance of securing access to markets based on assessments of the demand for the products of alternative development. They also stressed the importance of an appropriate infrastructure and a conducive environment, including roads, value-added production chains, farmer associations and special marketing regimes, for example those based on fair trade principles and on the commerce of organic products.

11. Many speakers emphasized the importance of providing licit income-generating opportunities and alternative livelihoods prior to reducing the area under illicit drug crop cultivation. Some speakers emphasized that eradicating illicit drug crops before providing development assistance resulted in loss of confidence by farmers, social conflict and instability; thus, no conditionality should be placed for the receipt of development assistance.

12. Some speakers noted that a proper sequencing of development interventions should take into account the ability to develop a licit agricultural market. In that connection, speakers mentioned the importance of having strong counterparts, a favourable climate, strong political support and market access, as well as price supports to small farmers until productive projects began to generate income.

13. Some speakers highlighted that the issue of cannabis plant cultivation should be addressed by the international community.

## **II. Limitations and problems**

14. At its 2nd meeting, on 3 July, the working group considered agenda item 4, entitled "Limitations and problems".

15. For its consideration of that item, the working group had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretariat on the results attained by Member States in achieving the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the limitations and problems encountered and the way forward: international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development (UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/2);

(b) Fifth report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem (E/CN.7/2008/2);

(c) Fifth report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem: Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development (E/CN.7/2008/2/Add.2).

16. A representative of the Secretariat made an introductory statement. Statements were made by the representatives of Bolivia, Argentina, France, Australia, Thailand, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, Afghanistan, Morocco, Algeria, Peru, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United States, Canada, Japan, India, Ecuador, Cuba and Mexico.

### **Deliberations**

17. Some speakers emphasized the need to strengthen data collection and highlighted the lack of research available to explain why farmers engaged in the cultivation of illicit drug crops. The international community was called upon to undertake research in that area to better guide programme formulation.

18. The lack of reliable, updated data on global cannabis plant cultivation was seen by some speakers as a hindrance to the development of policies to promote alternative development in areas under cannabis plant cultivation.

19. A number of speakers identified poverty as one of the principle factors driving the cultivation of illicit drug crops and called for a comprehensive approach to alternative development programmes that included economic, social, cultural and educational elements. Issues such as the absence of markets, the rule of law and short-term development prospects and the presence of barriers to trade and inadequate infrastructure were identified as other driving factors.

20. Many speakers recognized that there was a lack of long-term political and financial support for alternative development initiatives from Member States and international financial institutions. Inflexible programmes and limited funding from donor countries reduced the ability to be proactive and react to changing circumstances and hindered the ability to coordinate national development programmes.

21. Many speakers, recognizing that it was problematic to measure alternative development only through crop reduction indicators, underscored the importance of using human development indicators and other assessment tools to measure the impact of those programmes on the target population.

22. Several speakers emphasized that barriers to trade such as high tariffs, subsidies and other protectionist policies were obstacles to the successful marketing of alternative development products. In that regard, some other speakers noted that limited investment in infrastructure, value-added production chains, education, credit and basic services also hindered market access.

23. Many speakers noticed that attention should be paid to the relationship between drug demand and supply reduction.

24. Several speakers highlighted the issue of ambiguous laws and other pieces of national legislation on drugs that allowed cannabis use and were therefore seen by some as hindering the reduction of cannabis plant cultivation.

25. Some speakers noted that alternative development strategies that only targeted current illicit drug crop cultivation areas while not addressing areas of potential future cultivation and labour migration limited the possibility of achieving a sustainable reduction in illicit drug crop cultivation and promoting alternative development.

26. Some speakers noted that alternative development programmes that focused solely on addressing economic development were a hindrance to a broader concept of human development.

27. Several speakers acknowledged that transnational organized crime, drug traffickers and non-State actors posed a threat to the successful implementation of alternative development initiatives.

28. Several speakers noted that legitimate and sustainable income-generating opportunities should precede the eradication of illicit drug crops.

29. One speaker proposed reviewing the international drug control conventions with regard to the classification of the coca leaf. Several speakers stated that the

World Health Organization should be requested to lead impartial scientific research on the medicinal uses of coca leaf and its impact on human health.

### **III. The way forward: identification of elements to be discussed at intersessional meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

30. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 3 July, the working group considered agenda item 5, entitled “The way forward: identification of elements to be discussed at intersessional meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs:

- (a) Scope and reach of alternative development;
- (b) Inclusion of alternative development in a broader development agenda;
- (c) Sequenced interventions;
- (d) Assessing impact through monitoring and indicators”.

31. For its consideration of the item, the working group had before it the following:

(a) Note by the Secretariat on the results attained by Member States in achieving the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the limitations and problems encountered and the way forward: international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development (UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/2);

(b) “Making drug control ‘fit for purpose’: building on the UNGASS decade”; report by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as a contribution to the review of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.7/2008/CRP.17).

32. An introductory statement was made by the Secretariat. Statements were made by the representatives of the United Kingdom, Thailand, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bolivia, France, Cuba, Peru, Australia, Morocco, Algeria, Indonesia, Canada, Nigeria, Ecuador, Tunisia, Afghanistan, the United States and Argentina.

### **Deliberations**

33. Many speakers suggested that alternative development programmes should be incorporated into broad national development strategies and called upon international financial institutions to become engaged by including issues related to alternative development in the poverty reduction strategy papers and country assistance strategies negotiated with the World Bank.

34. Several speakers highlighted poverty as one of the factors leading to the cultivation of illicit drug crops. Some speakers expressed the view that, in developing alternative development programmes, interventions that included poor and marginalized communities that had not yet been affected by illicit drug crop cultivation should be taken into consideration.

35. Many speakers called on Governments to provide short-, medium- and long-term resources from their national budgets to complement the assistance provided by international donors to support alternative development programmes and strategies.

36. Several speakers pointed to the need to use human development indicators reflecting the Millennium Development Goals (A/56/326, annex) to measure the progress and impact of alternative development initiatives.

37. Many speakers identified factors that should be considered when formulating, implementing and monitoring alternative development programmes, such as: ensuring market access; strengthening farmer associations; establishing the rule of law; and supporting the economic and political integration of communities in marginalized areas to promote drug control efforts and security. Such integration efforts should include the possibility of supporting access to roads, schools, primary health care, electricity and other such services, all within a framework of respect for human rights and diverse cultural values.

38. Some speakers underscored that, with regard to respect for human rights, the diverse traditions and cultural values of different communities should also be considered in efforts to reduce the cultivation of illicit drug crops. Other speakers emphasized the link between the cultivation of illicit drug crops and human security.

39. Several speakers stressed the importance of having security and Government strategies aligned with alternative development strategies. Some speakers indicated that illicit drug crops should be eliminated as part of a comprehensive security strategy that also tackled the linkages with drug trafficking organizations.

40. Some speakers indicated that illicit drug crops should only be eradicated once sustainable, viable livelihoods were in place. Other speakers noted that efforts to promote alternative development programmes should be coordinated with efforts to eliminate illicit drug crops.

41. Many speakers proposed strengthening data collection systems in order to share best practices and lessons learned and in order to promote horizontal cooperation. Some speakers called for additional research to be carried out on the links between development and security, in recognition of the fact that one could not be achieved without the other.

42. Several speakers highlighted the need to reduce both the illicit supply of and the demand for drugs.

43. One speaker suggested that Member States should launch public information campaigns to raise people's awareness about the concept of shared responsibility and about the social value of alternative development products.

44. Several speakers indicated that Member States should take into account governance and security concerns when implementing alternative development programmes.

45. Some speakers expressed the view that Member States should, where appropriate, elevate the status of national drug control strategies and programmes, including the elimination of illicit drug crops, and integrate them into comprehensive security and governance strategies.



46. Some speakers emphasized that Member States should ensure that the values, traditions and customs of local communities and civil society are taken into account when developing national policies and laws, in accordance with article 14 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.<sup>1</sup> In that connection, one speaker expressed regret that consensus could not be reached to include that issue in the conclusions of the expert working group.

47. Some speakers were of the view that international financial institutions and UNODC should support States in addressing cannabis plant cultivation, in particular by providing funds for alternative development programmes.

48. One speaker noted that Member States should be urged to expedite the full implementation of the three international drug control conventions with respect to cannabis, where necessary with the assistance of UNODC and the international community.

49. Some speakers noted that the methods used to reduce the area under illicit drug crop cultivation should be implemented with a view to protecting the environment and should, in every case, take into account the particular characteristics of each State.

50. Some speakers expressed the view that Member States should not make the provision of development assistance conditional on reductions in the area under illicit drug crop cultivation. One speaker was of the opinion that incentives and deterrents should be part of an integrated, coordinated approach.

#### IV. Conclusions

51. At its 3rd, 4th and 5th meetings, on 3 and 4 July, the working group considered agenda item 6, entitled "Conclusions".

52. The experts participating in the working group agreed on the following:

(a) International assistance to Member States in addressing the problem of illicit drug crop cultivation and illicit drug production through integrated and sustainable alternative development should be enhanced. In that connection, long-term political and financial commitment from Governments and the international community should be ensured;

(b) Member States, multilateral agencies and international and regional financial institutions should ensure short-, medium- and long-term planning to allow for the continuous financial support of integrated and sustainable alternative development programmes, including preventive alternative development programmes, where appropriate, especially in particularly vulnerable areas;

(c) Recognizing that poverty and vulnerability are some of the factors behind illicit drug crop cultivation and that poverty eradication is a principal objective of the Millennium Development Goals, integrated and sustainable alternative development programmes, including preventive alternative development programmes, should, where appropriate, be included in national development

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

strategies that also take into account social, cultural, economic, political, educational and environmental aspects. In that regard, alternative development, where appropriate including preventive alternative development approaches and strategies, should be incorporated by development organizations and international financial institutions into poverty reduction strategy papers and country assistance strategies for States affected by the cultivation of illicit drug crops;

(d) Member States should promote plans and strategies with members of the development community, in particular international financial institutions, to incorporate alternative development approaches for countering illicit drugs into their wider development agendas, where they do not already exist;

(e) Products derived from alternative development programmes should be identified based on market demand and count on value-added production chains as well as secure and stable markets with fair prices for producers, in accordance with international trade rules. That should also include the required infrastructure and a conducive environment, including roads, the establishment of farmer associations and the use of special marketing regimes, for example those based on fair trade principles and the commerce of organic products;

(f) The design and implementation of alternative development programmes, including, when appropriate, a preventive approach, should involve all stakeholders, take into account the specific characteristics of the target area and incorporate grass-roots communities in project formulation, implementation and monitoring;

(g) When considering taking eradication measures, Member States should ensure that small-farmer households have adopted viable and sustainable livelihoods, so that measures may be properly sequenced in a sustainable fashion and appropriately coordinated;

(h) Further research should be conducted to assess the factors leading to the cultivation of illicit drug crops in order to formulate evidence-based measures;

(i) The proper and coordinated sequencing of development interventions should take into account the ability to develop licit income-generating activities. In that connection, the issues of the establishment of agreements and viable partnerships with small producers, favourable climatic conditions, strong political support and adequate market access need to be taken into account;

(j) Donor States are urged to increase efforts to harmonize, align and manage international development assistance to States affected by the cultivation of illicit drug crops, in particular taking into account the principles set out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;

(k) Other donor mechanisms, relevant international financial institutions, United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector are urged to increase their rural development support for regions and populations affected by illicit drug crop cultivation through long-term and flexible funding. States concerned must make a stronger commitment to financing alternative development;

(l) States not affected by illicit drug crop cultivation and, in particular, the private sector, are urged to provide greater access to markets for alternative development products, in accordance with international trade laws;

(m) Member States, UNODC and other relevant United Nations entities should support States requesting assistance with regard to improving systems to monitor and assess the qualitative and quantitative impact of alternative development and eradication programmes on socio-economic development and the sustainability of illicit drug crop reduction;

(n) States concerned, UNODC and other relevant key actors should strengthen their efforts to share the results of alternative development programmes with the broader development community through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In that regard, increased efforts need to be made to highlight the work accomplished and the benefits provided to affected communities;

(o) Member States, with the support of UNODC, should consider developing a set of international guiding principles on alternative development based on the sharing of best practices and lessons learned in different countries and regions. Problems encountered should be evaluated and the lessons learned should be disseminated to the broader development community;

(p) Donor States, the States concerned and other relevant key development actors should examine innovative ways to promote alternative development programmes that are environmentally friendly;

(q) Donor States, international financial institutions and UNODC, within its existing mandate, should support States engaged in alternative development by carrying out preventative alternative development activities, where appropriate, or proactive development measures to prevent the expansion of illicit drug crops and the migration of workers to areas under illicit drug crop cultivation and illicit drug production zones;

(r) Member States should ensure that cannabis is addressed in any future political declaration, also taking into account, inter alia, links to transnational organized crime;

(s) Member States in which cocaine, heroin and cannabis are consumed should continue to allocate funds for drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation;

(t) Alternative development should be assessed using human development indicators, including those included in the Millennium Development Goals, and not be limited to statistics on illicit drug crop cultivation;

(u) Communities in marginalized regions should be integrated into the economic and political mainstream in order to further drug control efforts and security. If appropriate, such integration should include the possibility of supporting access to roads, schools, primary health care, electricity and other services and infrastructure;

(v) Development assistance provided to communities in areas under illicit drug crop cultivation should take into account the overall aims of human rights protection and poverty alleviation;

(w) Member States should recognize that the success of efforts to eliminate or reduce illicit drug crops and to promote alternative development are closely linked to the success of efforts to eliminate or reduce the demand for illicit drugs.

## **V. Adoption of the report of the working group**

53. At its 5th meeting, on 4 July 2008, the working group adopted its report, including its conclusions, to be submitted for consideration at the intersessional meetings preceding the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

## **VI. Organization of the meeting**

### **A. Opening and duration of the meeting**

54. The open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development was held from 2 to 4 July 2008, pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 51/4. The Chairperson of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs made an opening statement. The elected Chairperson of the working group also addressed the meeting. The Secretary introduced the provisional agenda and the proposed organization of work (UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/1).

### **B. Attendance**

55. The meeting was attended by representatives of 65 Member States, one entity maintaining a permanent observer mission to the United Nations and one observer for an intergovernmental organization (for a list of participants, see UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/INF.1/Rev.1).

### **C. Election of officers**

56. At its 1st meeting, on 2 July 2008, the working group on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development elected the following officers by acclamation:

<i>Office</i>	<i>Regional group</i>	<i>Elected officer</i>
<i>Chairperson</i>	Group of Eastern European States	Egle Latauskiene (Lithuania)
<i>First Vice-Chairperson</i>	Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	Horacio Bazoberry (Bolivia)
<i>Rapporteur</i>	Group of African States	Emmanuel Oluwadare Oguntuyi (Nigeria)

## **D. Adoption of the agenda**

57. At its 1st meeting, on 2 July 2008, the working group adopted by consensus the following provisional agenda (UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/1):

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Significant and measurable results in international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development.
4. Limitations and problems.
5. The way forward: identification of elements to be discussed at intersessional meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs:
  - (a) Scope and reach of alternative development;
  - (b) Inclusion of alternative development in a broader development agenda;
  - (c) Sequenced interventions;
  - (d) Assessing impact through monitoring and indicators.
6. Conclusions.
7. Adoption of the report of the working group.

58. Prior to the adoption of the provisional agenda, the representative of Bolivia noted that the functioning of the international drug control system needed to be considered by the working group in its deliberations.

## **E. Documentation**

59. The documents before the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development are listed in the annex to the present report.

## **F. Closure of the meeting**

60. A closing statement was made by the Vice-Chairperson of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group.

## Annex

### List of documents before the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development

<i>Document</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/1	2	Provisional agenda, annotations and programme of work
UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/2	3, 4 and 5	Note by the Secretariat on the results attained by Member States in achieving the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the limitations and problems encountered and the way forward: international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development
UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/CRP.1		Note by the International Narcotics Control Board on the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development
UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/CRP.2		U.S. proposals for consideration in the UNGASS review
UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/CRP.3		Note by the Government of Thailand on the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development
UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/CRP.4		Key points identified by EU experts to be included in the conclusion of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development: EU Presidency Paper
E/CN.7/2008/2	3 and 4	Fifth report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem
E/CN.7/2008/Add.2	3 and 4	Fifth report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem: Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development
E/CN.7/2008/8	3	Report of the Executive Director on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session

<i>Document</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
E/CN.7/2007/7	3	Report of the Executive Director on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session
E/CN.7/2008/CRP.1-9		Complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session
E/CN.7/2008/CRP.12		“Beyond 2008”: contribution of non-governmental organizations to the implementation of the Political Declaration and Action Plans adopted by the twentieth special session of the General Assembly
E/CN.7/2008/CRP.16		Report of the International Narcotics Control Board pursuant to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly
E/CN.7/2008/CRP.17		“Making drug control ‘fit for purpose’: building on the UNGASS decade”; report by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as a contribution to the review of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly