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**Round-table discussions of the high-level segment:
strengthening international cooperation in countering the
world drug problem using shared responsibility as a basis
for an integrated, comprehensive, balanced and
sustainable approach in the fight against drugs through
domestic and international policies**

Outcome of the round table on strengthening international cooperation in countering the world drug problem using shared responsibility as a basis for an integrated, comprehensive, balanced and sustainable approach in the fight against drugs through domestic and international policies, submitted by the Chairman of the round table, Ali Asghar Soltanieh (Islamic Republic of Iran)

On 11 March 2009, the outcome of the round table on strengthening international cooperation in countering the world drug problem using shared responsibility as a basis for an integrated, comprehensive, balanced and sustainable approach in the fight against drugs through domestic and international policies was presented by the chairman of the round table, Ali Asghar Soltanieh (Islamic Republic of Iran). The outcome was as follows:

1. Among the many important points contained in the comprehensive statements and comments made at the round-table discussion, there appears to be broad consensus on the following points. Many of these points are already reflected in the Political Declaration and Action Plan.
2. Producing, transit and destination countries are all links in a chain. All have to work together to achieve results. Vehicles for joint planning should be created, and multidisciplinary road maps for dealing cooperatively with specific drug-trafficking chains should be developed. Those efforts should not be politicized, and they should not be coercive in nature. Rather, they should



be truly cooperative ventures undertaken in a sense of joint interest and common responsibility.

3. On a regional basis, joint programmes should be created for creating “drug-free zones”. While that goal may not be attainable in the short-term, long-term interests would be advanced through a demonstration of collective political will and determination. The regional offices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime should be empowered to help promote regional drug control programmes, in particular in vulnerable areas where States are ill-equipped to independently tackle the illicit drug problem. Since drug-trafficking chains transcend regional boundaries, there can be no substitute for global efforts.

4. Interregional cooperation has to be further strengthened since drug smugglers do not limit their activities to one country or one region. Despite the establishment of international instruments, there remain serious impediments to international cooperation, including issues of mutual legal assistance and information-sharing. While large numbers of extraditions have been made, there remain problems in that area, including the fact that many of the bilateral agreements are outdated. There is a need for the harmonization of legislation, to be promoted through regional cooperative efforts. Enduring barriers to international cooperation need to be identified and overcome.

5. Money-laundering remains an area in which far more needs to be done, despite the impressive efforts made to date. In that regard, international cooperation is indispensable, as today financial flows are truly globalized. The mechanisms for redirecting seized funds towards drug control efforts need to be streamlined. That would provide much-needed resources during a time of international economic uncertainty.

6. Reliable data collection facilitates an effective response. Globally, there is a wealth of experience in drug control to be shared. It is important to create links between Member States and the scientific and academic communities to generate a sound basis for policy. Intelligence-sharing between national law enforcement agencies should be enhanced. Clear assessments of the drug threat and related vulnerabilities must be made on a national and international basis. Early warning systems could be established to detect drug threats and predict future developments. The channels through which global drug information flows need to be consolidated.

7. Public-private partnerships, in particular involving manufacturers of precursor chemicals, are needed to tackle these issues. An international code of conduct for manufacturers of precursors should be developed. Sophisticated information systems are needed for monitoring the export and re-export of precursors. Efforts to regulate transnational commerce, such as container control, can pay dividends in our collective efforts against illicit drugs.

8. Illicit drugs fuel political instability, environmental damage and local drug abuse in producing countries. In addition to being the occasion for a sense of shared responsibility, these problems provide strong motivation for producing States to address the drug problem. At the same time, participation in international drug control efforts may come with significant opportunity costs for developing countries. As most producing countries are poor, they

continue to need international support. Access to markets can provide the basis for their economic development, thus overcoming the main vulnerability that drug traffickers exploit.

9. Reducing the area under illicit drug crop cultivation is not enough; work needs to be done in the areas of money-laundering, precursor control and alternative development and in developing a strategic approach to gaining access to markets. The cultivation of illicit drug crops such as coca bush and opium poppy may be concentrated in a remarkably small area. Thus, eradication efforts alone are insufficient for dealing with the problem. Real and sustainable alternatives, under the heading of “preventive alternative development”, need to be identified for those who cultivate illicit drug crops and for those at risk of illicit drug use.

10. Approaches aimed at tackling organized crime, such as measures to tackle trafficking in small arms, can have a positive impact on the drug-trafficking situation. By dealing with the agents of instability, the environment in which illicit drug crop cultivation takes place will be disabled. Corruption is a great enabler of all forms of smuggling, which is why dealing with corruption would have repercussions far beyond the issue of illicit drugs. The United Nations Convention against Corruption¹ should be more widely ratified and vigorously applied.

11. Transit countries suffer a set of problems similar to those of producer countries. In transit countries as well drug trafficking can undermine development, and they may be at risk of becoming producing and consumer countries. Farmers may be displaced to make way for illicit drug crop cultivation. Children may be used to move drugs. Public security, public health and economic growth are threatened. Areas where the State is absent are under threat everywhere. Preventive work to address such threats is vital.

12. Transit countries need assistance in controlling borders. Intelligence-sharing is essential to arresting international illicit drug flows. Border liaison officers can be useful in that respect. The problem of what to do with “mules” needs to be addressed, as their sheer numbers pose a challenge for developing transit States struggling to maintain human rights standards in overcrowded prisons.

13. Demand reduction, a public health issue, must not be neglected. Experiences in treatment and rehabilitation should be shared.

14. Cooperation in combating HIV should be enhanced in our collective efforts to address drugs.

15. Non-governmental organizations present at the round table requested further opportunities to enhance their contribution to the common cause of international cooperation.

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 42146.