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Implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem: Supply reduction and related measures**International Workshop and Conference on Alternative Development in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, Thailand, 6-11 November 2011¹****I. The International Workshop on Alternative Development**

1. As the first part of the International Workshop and Conference on alternative development, pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) resolutions 53/6 and 54/4, Thailand organized a Workshop in association with the Government of Peru and in close collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).² The International Workshop on Alternative Development was held in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 6-11 November, 2011. The objective of the event was to gather inputs and contributions and to assess past and ongoing efforts for the future endeavour of developing a set of international guiding principles to serve as guidelines for more effective alternative development programmes in drug-producing areas, to be considered by the high-level representatives attending this workshop and conference.

2. The Workshop was attended by 104 participants, including experts in the field of alternative development and government representatives from 28 countries. The following countries were represented: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia,

* E/CN.7/2012/1.

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² See Note by the Secretariat on the follow-up to the promotion of best practices and lessons learned for the sustainability and integrality of alternative development programmes and to the proposal to organize an international workshop and conference on alternative development (E/CN.7/2012/8).



Colombia, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, United States of America, Viet Nam, and Yemen.

3. The Workshop was held in the form of working groups and plenary sessions. It was a good opportunity for experts to discuss perspectives, share experiences and best practices in open debate with a view to identifying inputs for international guiding principles. The Workshop consisted of field visits to various programme sites in the Doi Tung Development Project, Chiang Rai Province, and the Royal Agricultural Station in Angkhang, Chiang Mai Province, former major opium poppy growing areas in the Golden Triangle. This arrangement of the Workshop provided opportunity for the participants to engage directly with former opium poppy growing communities and enhance understanding of the realities and complexities of the problems, as well as the strategies and programmes on how this was overcome.

II. Deliberations at the International Workshop

4. The Workshop discussions covered a number of important issues relative to alternative development, including: balanced approach and proper sequencing; promotion and protection of human rights; security, governance and the rule of law; strengthening research, data collection and assessment tools; international cooperation, coordination and funding; shared responsibility, social entrepreneurship, marketing and trade; and sustainability, ownership and participatory approach.

5. The following are the most salient points arising from discussion in the working groups and the plenary sessions:

- Poverty and the inadequate enforcement of the rule of law are some of the root causes of the illicit cultivation and therefore need to be addressed when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating alternative development programmes.
- Alternative development programmes should be mainstreamed as part of the broader national development strategy.
- Development assistance in areas with illicit cultivation must be undertaken in full compliance with the overall aims of the promotion and protection of human rights.
- Assessment of quantitative and qualitative impacts of alternative development programmes should include the use of human-development indicators and reflect the Millennium Development Goals.
- International financial institutions and the broader development community should allocate sufficient financial and other resources to alternative development programmes.
- Alternative development programmes should take due account of traditional licit uses where there is historic evidence of such use.

- Alternative development programmes should be based on a market driven approach with an initial emphasis on local and domestic consumption, before aiming for national and international markets. The programmes should include rural economy models that strengthen local markets.
 - Environmental conservation, the promotion of rational natural resource management, the protection of fauna and flora and biodiversity are also key elements of alternative development strategies.
 - Monoculture generates a number of risks for the local communities including environmental degradation, dependence on market demands and prices, and reduction in agricultural areas affecting food security and other livelihoods.
 - Alternative development and strategies should take into account a sense of ownership and community participation.
 - Land tenure and other related resource management issues are also key components of building licit and sustainable livelihoods.
 - Social entrepreneurship — the practice of using business profits from value-added, locally manufactured goods to generate social benefits — should be encouraged in order to promote faster gains in socio-economic sustainability and social security.
 - Appropriate resources to initiatives that include the reduction of both illicit demand and illicit supply are necessary to maintain a balanced approach and to achieve maximum effectiveness in the fight against drug abuse.
6. There were, however, diverse views among participants which require further discussions. These are outlined below.
- Individuals engaged in small drug trafficking due to poverty should also have access to alternative development assistance.
 - At the moment of adoption the delegation of Bolivia stressed the point that efforts should be made to explore the potential for an increase of licit uses in order to decrease the share of cultivation currently destined for the illicit market.
 - Promoting increased cooperation between the security and development sectors should adhere to the principles of human rights protection and should explore the impact of potential militarization in the area in question.
 - The need to consider developing strategies to control excess coca crop cultivation through mechanisms of community control (social control) with the active participation of all relevant stakeholders.

III. Background Information on Alternative Development

A. Introduction

7. The International Workshop and Conference on Alternative Development (ICAD) are being organized at a key moment when member states and the international community feel the need to reflect upon challenges facing

development-oriented drug control. The ten-year review of the progress made on the *Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development* adopted at the 1998 United Nations (UN) Special Session of the General Assembly (UNGASS) provides an assessment of how the international community has addressed the cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs.³ A consensus was reached at the fifty-first session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)⁴ in 2008 that alternative development (AD) has been a useful approach in addressing the cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs from the development perspective, but that the reach of AD programmes and the resources allocated to them have been insufficient over the past 10 years.

8. During the High-Level Segment of the CND held in Vienna in March 2009, Member States endorsed the *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*. This included a specific *Action Plan on International cooperation on eradicating the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and on alternative development*. The action plan represents a significant advance as it promotes alternative development within a framework of broad national rural development, emphasizes the need to address poverty as a driver of illicit crop cultivation, and suggests the coupling of both human development and crop reduction indicators to measure the success of alternative development efforts.

9. The recent monitoring reports from the United Nations Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme (ICMP) show an alarming trend: Of the six principal producers of coca bush and opium poppy, five showed an increase in the area under cultivation. Hence, it is clear that AD programmes and resources have not fully addressed the needs of communities. The increase in land under cultivation could potentially raise the amount of heroin and cocaine on the market; moreover, it could have a devastating effect on fragile ecosystems, the rule of law, and national development and security, especially when combined with repressive measures intended to suppress illicit cultivation. This in turn undermines the government's presence, leads to decreased foreign direct investment and contributes to the deterioration of agricultural land and forests.

10. Although the international community is slowly coming to recognize the relationship between these factors and the need to deliver properly sequenced development assistance to marginalized small farming communities, the long delays in comprehensive programme design and on-the-ground project delivery is fomenting an increase in social unrest, weakening confidence in government and the international community and, in some cases, fuelling support for violent, non-state actors.

³ The terminology used in the 2009 *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem* is "illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances."

⁴ *Report of the fifty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs*, E/2008/28. E/CN.7/2008/15., page 50, item 42.

11. Given this situation, member states, international organizations, development agencies and the international financial institutions must identify ways to work together to bring development-oriented drug control to the forefront of their agendas. Greater involvement of civil society actors, incorporating their experiences and ideas, is also necessary. The international community as a whole should not be satisfied with current efforts and cannot expect long-term sustainable reductions in illicit cultivation unless poverty reduction, environmental protection, food security and improved social and economic conditions are the principal objectives in their programmes and strategies.

B. The Concept and Evolution of Alternative Development

12. Alternative Development — undertaking rural development in opium poppy and coca growing areas — is an integrated approach to improving community livelihood options that addresses all of the key factors that drive opium poppy and coca cultivation. Experience shows that AD is more effective and more sustainable when integrated into a broader development scheme that aims to improve the livelihoods of marginal rural populations. Through strengthening licit livelihood opportunities, AD also aims to reduce the cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs.

13. An appreciation of current thinking on how to promote development in areas where coca and opium poppy cultivation is thriving also requires understanding the field's conceptual evolution since the late 1960s. Progressing from the notion of "crop substitution" projects to "alternative development" programmes and then to an "alternative livelihoods" approach has generally involved a transition from isolated, project-specific interventions to broader, multisectoral policies aimed at reducing farmers' reliance on crops for the illicit market by addressing the structural and institutional factors that shape their decisions to grow poppies or coca.

14. As early as the late 1960s, crop substitution began to be viewed as an effective means to replace illicit cultivation with other agricultural alternatives.⁵ By the early 1970s, the U.S. government and the UN began promoting crop substitution programmes in Asia and in Latin America. These programs predominated through the 1980s. However, little attention was initially paid to the myriad of problems that led farmers to grow opium poppy and coca in the first place: lack of roads and transportation infrastructure, no access to credit and markets, inadequate irrigation, lack of land rights, situations of conflict, crises and violence, weak governance institutions and the like. Moreover, it quickly became evident that finding agricultural alternatives with consistent advantages over poppy and coca production was extremely difficult. The overly simplistic notion of crop substitution came to be

⁵ See, for example, United Nations Survey Team on the Economic and Social Needs of the Opium-Producing Areas of Thailand, *Report of the United Nations Survey Team on the Economic and Social Needs of the Opium-Producing Areas in Thailand, January/February 1967*. Bangkok: Government Printing House. 1967. Also http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin_1969-01-01_1_page002.html. A result of this study was an early project of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) in Thailand in 1972, with U.S. funding, to assist Thai efforts initiated in 1969. See Ronald D. Renard, *Opium Reduction in Thailand 1970-2000: A Thirty-Year Journey*. Bangkok: UN International Drug Control Programme, Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific. 2001, p. 70 passim.

replaced by that of alternative development, which sought to address these structural problems and also provide other sources of economic income in addition to farming, such as the industrialization of agricultural produce and off-farm employment opportunities.

15. A turning point in international legislative mandates came in 1988. Prior to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the two previous International Conventions (1961 and 1971) discussed only criminalization and sanctions for illicit crop cultivation. However, in 1988, the Member States recognized the need to consider implementing integrated rural development as a means to reduce illicit crop cultivation. A further important stage in policy guidance came at the 1998 UNGASS when the UN defined AD as a broad concept compatible with the positions of many countries: “*A process to prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances through specifically designed rural development measures in the context of sustained national economic growth and sustainable development efforts in countries taking action against drugs, recognizing the particular socio-cultural characteristics of the target communities and groups, within the framework of a comprehensive and permanent solution to the problem of illicit drugs.*”⁶

16. Today, the alternative development concept has broadened into the idea of “alternative livelihoods,” “rural development in a drugs environment” or “development in a drugs environment.” Donors such as the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and others have embraced the idea that in addition to addressing underlying structural conditions faced by small producers, their overall quality of life must be improved, including improved access to health care, education, housing and the like. Successful AD programmes in Latin America and Southeast Asia testify to the importance of such an approach. Alternative livelihoods thus refers to “improving living conditions in the cultivation region as a whole, to reducing violence, and to integrating areas that have been excluded from the life of the rest of the country.”⁷

17. However, the AD approach is still controversial in the debate on international drug and development policy. In particular, some criticize AD’s dual objectives of, on the one hand, reducing illicit crop cultivation, and on the other, promoting sustainable development processes and reducing poverty.⁸ This raises the difficult question of how to manage differing expectations among all of the stakeholders.

⁶ Resolution A/RES/S-20/4 by the General Assembly on 8 Sept 1998, available at: <http://www.unodc.org/documents/alternative-development/UNGASSActionPlanAD.pdf> (last checked 12 Oct 2011).

⁷ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), *Development-oriented Drug Control: Policy, Strategy, Experience, Intersectoral Solutions*, March 2004, p. 23.

⁸ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), *Alternative Development — A critical look at a controversial concept*, to be published in November 2011, p. 1f.

C. Drugs as a Development Issue

18. A strong correlation exists between poverty and the cultivation of opium poppy and coca for the production of narcotic drugs. According to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, poverty is: “A human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.”⁹

19. Those involved in cultivating opium poppy and coca are mostly poor subsistence farmers who grow them as cash crops in order to buy food, clothes, medicine, and access to education for their children. Poppy and coca also often have traditional uses among these communities, and where access to health care and essential medicines is inadequate, they are used to treat various ailments. In some Andean countries, coca has a variety of uses. Andean peoples have consumed the coca leaf for centuries. Coca chewing is an integral part of traditional and religious ceremonies and it has many beneficial attributes, such as helping to alleviate the symptoms of high altitudes, cold and hunger. It is a mild stimulant and some studies have shown that the coca leaf may have nutritional value.

20. Similar development issues related to subsistence agriculture and traditional uses apply to the widespread cannabis cultivation found in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Efforts to broaden the AD discussion to include cannabis — coming from countries like Indonesia, Jamaica, Morocco, Nigeria, and Paraguay, among others — have so far failed to reach UN consensus or to attract major donor attention. The sheer magnitude and global spread of cannabis cultivation has turned the global cannabis market into an unmanageable phenomenon from a supply reduction or alternative development perspective. Pilot alternative development projects in Indonesia and Morocco have been implemented, but results have not yet led to the placement of cannabis alongside opium poppy or coca in the AD debate.

21. A strong case has been made, especially by Ecuador, to also invest in “preventive” alternative development in areas where illicit cultivation could start or in areas that offer a pool of available workers for harvest. But in spite of the merits of the arguments, preventive AD has so far not attracted sufficient international donor interest. Funding for “traditional” alternative development targeting existing opium poppy and coca growing areas appears to be under too much pressure already to consider seriously any requests, however legitimate, to expand AD’s conceptual scope.

22. The perception that farmers who engage in illicit cultivation are wealthy is a common misconception; equally incorrect is the idea that illicit cultivation is simply a wealth maximizing strategy for growers. More often than not, these households are worse off socially and economically than other rural households, are concentrated in remote areas with little access to government services, and are subject to the whims of whichever armed powerbroker /non-state violent actors have taken charge. Sustainable alternative income opportunities are not available. In Afghanistan, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, incomes from the illicit drug

⁹ United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2001), *Poverty and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 10/05/2001, 10 May 2001, E/C.12/2001/10.

economy are unevenly distributed and skewed in favour of larger actors who already have access to financial and physical assets or those who are involved in the drug trade.

23. In short, poverty remains one of the key factors driving opium poppy and coca cultivation. The focus of alternative development programmes should be oriented to addressing the underlying causes of poverty and improving the socio-economic conditions of these communities. Illicit cultivation should thus be treated primarily as a development issue.

D. Alternative Development and the Millennium Development Goals

24. AD programmes which directly address the causes of illicit cultivation contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly those of “eradicating extreme poverty and hunger” (MDG 1) and “ensuring environmental sustainability” (MDG 7). Therefore, the AD approach is also in line with general poverty elimination programmes worldwide that promote an integrated approach involving all actors.

25. The MDG 1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger includes “promoting at all levels a strong enabling environment for enhancing agricultural production, productivity and sustainability in developing countries, including through public and private investment, land-use planning, efficient water management, adequate rural infrastructure, including irrigation, and developing strong agricultural value chains and improving access of farmers to markets and land and supportive economic policies and institutions at the national and international level.”

26. Achieving the MDGs by 2015 will require scaling up development in vulnerable and marginalized rural communities, including those involved in illicit cultivation, to help improve their livelihoods and enable the communities to meet their basic needs. The international community as a whole must ensure that a larger percentage of farming communities engaged in illicit crop cultivation are provided with development assistance. If this is not accomplished, the goal of significantly and sustainably reducing illicit cultivation will not be realized. As the UN General Assembly concluded in September 2010: “We also recognize that policies and actions must focus on the poor and those living in the most vulnerable situations ... so that they benefit from progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.” The resolution calls for “supporting small-scale producers, including women, to increase production of a wide spectrum of traditional and other crops and livestock, and improving their access to markets, credits and inputs, thereby increasing income-earning opportunities for poor people and their ability to purchase food and improve their livelihoods.”¹⁰

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution, “Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,” (A/Res/65/1), adopted 22 September 2010.

E. The Need for a Human-Centric Approach and Human Development Indicators in Development-Oriented Drugs Control

27. Many AD projects primarily measure their success by the reduction in the cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs. Yet it is questionable if this is an appropriate measure of success because it ignores the conditions under which opium poppy and coca are cultivated and the common problem of replanting following eradication. A UNODC evaluation report¹¹ to the CND in 2008 stated “there is little proof that the eradications reduce illicit cultivation in the long term as the crops move somewhere else.” The report also concluded “alternative development must be evaluated through indicators of human development and not technically as a function of illicit production statistics”. Moreover, the association of eradication with development interventions aimed at reducing illicit cultivation alienates the wider development community.

28. The amount of land under cultivation in a particular region for a short period of time (as in the final years of a several-year AD project) does not reflect long-term success. For example, the first major opium eradication campaign in Afghanistan in 2003 resulted in the eradication of 21,430 of approximately 80,000 hectares (ha). Success was short-lived, as the illicit cultivation rebounded to 131,000 ha the following year and reached a peak of 193,000 ha in 2007, with total yield increasing from 3,600 tons in 2003 to 8,200 tons in 2007.¹² Similar experiences have been noted in Latin America. According to UNODC’s *World Drug Report 2011*, coca cultivation in the Andean region has remained above 150,000 hectares over the past eight years, and because of improvements in the cocaine production process made in recent years, more illicit drugs can be produced with fewer coca leaves. With regards to cocaine production, due to a review of its reporting procedures, UNODC did not present specific statistics for 2009 and 2010, but gave ranges of 842-1,111 metric tons for 2009 and 786-1,054 for 2010. If the highest figures in those ranges are used, the estimate of the amount produced has not varied much in recent years.

29. While reductions in cultivation — and impact measurement based on that objective — are not an adequate measure of real progress or long-term impact in drugs control, a direct relationship exists between improved social and economic conditions of an area and the sustained reduction of illicit cultivation.¹³ In Thailand, the reduction in opium cultivation from an estimated 17,900 ha in 1967¹⁴ to less

¹¹ E/CN.7/2008/2/Add.2, Fifth Report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem, Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and of Alternative Development, Vienna, 10th to 14th March 2008.

¹² UNODC, *World Drug Report 2010*.

¹³ See, for example, Ronald Renard, *Opium Reduction in Thailand, 1970-2000: A Thirty-Year Journey*, Bangkok: UNODC, 2001; Marcus Williamson, “Opium Reduction and Highland Development: Thailand Case Study” Highland Research and Development Institute, Thailand, 25 October 2006 (from website: http://www.adkn.org/assets/adkn_33.pdf); and Lao National Commission on Drug Control and Supervision, “National Drug Control Master Plan, A Five Year Strategy to Address the Illicit Drug Control Problem in the Lao PDR, 2009-2013.

¹⁴ United Nations Survey Team on the Economic and Social Needs of the Opium-Producing Areas of Thailand, *Report of the United Nations Survey Team on the Economic and Social Needs of the Opium-Producing Areas in Thailand, January/February 1967*. Bangkok: Government Printing House. 1967.

than 1,000 ha in recent years, and similar recent reductions in Lao PDR from over 26,000 ha in 1998 to less than 2,000 ha in 2009,¹⁵ have resulted from significant improvements in economic opportunities and the provision of social services to those who used to grow illicit crops, along with greater security, improved infrastructure, and access to markets.

30. In conclusion, control of illicit cultivation needs to be based on a more human-centric development approach to address the underlying causes and insecurities that enable and encourage cultivation, and need to be distinct from (though coordinated with) law enforcement. Under such an approach, impact measurement of AD programmes should take into account human development indicators, in addition to coca and opium poppy cultivation estimates.

F. Proper Sequencing of Development Interventions and Eradication

31. Over the last decade there has been considerable progress in developing a greater understanding of the impact of rural development in poppy and coca growing areas. Several key reports have identified important lessons learned, especially about the proper sequencing of development interventions and eradication measures.¹⁶

32. The 1998 UNGASS Action Plan warned that: “In areas where alternative development programmes have not yet created viable alternative income opportunities, the application of forced eradication might endanger the success of alternative development programmes.”¹⁷

33. The UNODC noted in 2008 that it is important to: “Ensure that eradication is not undertaken until small-farmer households have adopted viable and sustainable livelihoods and that interventions are properly sequenced” and “not make development assistance conditional on reductions in illicit cultivation.”¹⁸

34. Furthermore, in the “Beyond 2008 Declaration” issued in July 2008, the consensus contribution of global civil society to the UNGASS review process highlighted the need to: “... develop further long-term, sustainable, ecologically-sensitive, and fully inclusive alternative development programmes in cooperation with civil society organizations including indigenous, peasant and farmer organizations and non-governmental organizations and to take into account traditional licit use, in line with Article 14 of the 1988 Convention” ... and to “ensure, before considering eradication measures, that peasants have access to

¹⁵ UNODC, *World Drug Report 2011*, p. 59.

¹⁶ See for example *Alternative Development: A Global Thematic Evaluation* (2005) prepared pursuant to CND resolution 45/14 and the *Thematic Evaluation of UNODC Alternative Development Initiatives* (2006).

¹⁷ A/RES/S-20/4, *Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development*, 8 September 1998, paragraph 31.

¹⁸ UNODC/CND/2008/WG.3/2. *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.*

viable and sustainable livelihoods so that interventions will be properly sequenced and coordinated.”¹⁹

35. The 2009 Action Plan resulting from the 10-year UNGASS review concurred: “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.”²⁰

36. As experience has demonstrated, reductions in illicit cultivation achieved with successful AD tend to be at the local or national level, with production often shifting elsewhere to meet global demand. Sustained reductions in supply at the global level also require reductions on the demand side, so expectations regarding AD’s contribution to global supply reduction should be very modest. This is even truer, though, for eradication-led approaches which are not only similarly limited by global market dynamics, but tend to be unsustainable even at the local and national level.

G. Critical Pillars of a Successful AD Approach

37. The success of AD programmes depends upon a few key elements founded upon the principle of shared responsibility, recognizing that any successful strategy must combine drug demand reduction, law enforcement, and alternative development.

38. These critical pillars of a successful policy need to include the recognition that poverty is a multidimensional problem that requires a multidimensional approach. They also need to include the important role of sustainable resource use and management, the provision of social services, and addressing the problems of conflict, crises, lack of governance, violence, rule of law and security that characterises much of the areas where opium poppy and coca is cultivated.

39. As the General Assembly noted: “We recognize the specific development challenges related to peace building and early recovery in countries affected by conflict and the effect of these challenges on their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We request donor countries to provide adequate, timely and predictable development assistance in support of these efforts, tailored to country-specific needs and situations, at the request of the recipient country.”²¹

40. It is vital that AD programmes involve local communities in the decision-making processes regarding the design, implementation and monitoring of the development interventions, in order to ensure community ownership and utilize local know-how so that they actually benefit from the projects that are designed to

¹⁹ http://www.unodc.org/documents/NGO/B2008_Declaration_and_Resolutions_English.pdf.

²⁰ *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*, Part II D, *International cooperation on eradicating the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and on alternative development*, paragraph 47(g), High-level segment, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Vienna, 11-12 March 2009.

²¹ General Assembly resolution, “Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,” (A/Res/65/1), adopted 22 September 2010.

improve their lives. When properly crafted, AD aims to break the poverty cycle by promoting sustainable livelihoods through informed local decision-making, the revival and support of traditional skills, and access to new information, formal education, and skills training that will help marginalized farmers make better-informed decisions. To identify the deficits and development potential of the particular households, cooperatives and production associations, a baseline study at the beginning of the project cycle is crucial. The situation of women and children in particular needs to be taken into account.

41. Illicit cultivation mostly takes place in remote and underdeveloped areas where communities' land rights and usage is unclear. Successful AD programmes should therefore also address land rights and tenure in order to improve access to and use of land and reduce the vulnerability of communities and their dependency on illicit cultivation. Collective and community property needs to be respected. Improving access to markets and social and productive infrastructure leading to value added systems is also important to create economically viable and licit alternatives.

42. Local institutions, organizations and producer cooperatives need to be supported and strengthened to enable them to effectively accompany and assume a leading role within the AD strategies. Farming communities should not be viewed as simply producers of raw materials, but rather recognized as budding entrepreneurs who can manage farming schemes all the way from seed to market.

43. As the EU has noted:

- “No single project or programme can address the multiple factors that drive illicit drug production;
- Evidence points to the fact that it is a combination of improved governance, security and economic growth that will deliver the development impact required to improve the life and livelihood of primary stakeholders and reduce illicit drug [crop] cultivation; and
- Development assistance in illicit crop producing areas should be undertaken in full compliance with the overall aims of human rights protection, poverty alleviation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace building and human security.”²²

44. The importance of strong national political commitment — supported by the allocation of significant human, financial and technical resources — cannot be underestimated and must be viewed as an indispensable pillar for properly designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating alternative development programmes.

H. Linking Alternative Development and Environmental Concerns

45. The state of (and access to) natural resources contributes to the communities' choices in livelihood strategy. The lack of healthy and accessible natural resources

²² EU Presidency Paper, *Key points identified by experts to be included in the conclusion of the open ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug and on alternative development*, July the 3rd, 2008, pg. 2.

can be one of the driving factors leading to illicit cultivation and further environmental degradation and/or environmental crimes.

46. The use of natural resources must be recognized as a means for subsistence for communities and groups that depend on commodities such as bushmeat, fuel-wood, timber, and non-timber forest products to meet their livelihood needs. A popular (yet not universally accepted) assumption of early studies in this field was that poverty leads to environmental degradation, because poor people have higher discount rates. Hence they tend to consume today, rather than save for tomorrow. Inevitably, this affects the future availability of natural resources.

47. For farmers in dire need of income and facing a severe lack of options, many of their available activities are illicit and harm natural resources. Aside from cultivating coca or poppy, other economic activities — such as illegal logging, wildlife poaching, over-fishing, or waste dumping — offer opportunities of quick returns to vulnerable communities affected by rural poverty, even if they damage the future of their land, forest, or water resources.

48. This may be exacerbated by conflict, political instability and the presence of insurgence movements. In these cases, the same factors that have facilitated coca or poppy cultivation, including financing of the insurgency, may lead to other criminal activities, contributing to environmental degradation.

49. A sector-wide approach towards alternative development requires adequate measures to create incentives for rural communities to refrain from engaging in other illegal activities that would harm natural resources, not just incentives to stop growing the crops used for illicit production of narcotic drugs. The success of alternative development is also affected by the capacity to prevent other activities that degrade the environment and trigger a poverty-trap for those communities. This vicious cycle needs to be ended.

50. One way to assure environmental protection with poverty reduction is through the provision of incentives for conservation, allowing communities to improve their livelihoods while caring for the environment. For example, reforestation programmes that allocate land as a mix of conservation forest, economic forest, and sustenance forest can assist in balancing the community's survival with environmental protection, contributing to more sustainable outcomes.

I. Technical Assistance, Funding and Cooperation

51. As in other types of international development efforts, North-South partnerships, with funding and expertise from the North, have dominated AD arrangements. The dominant sources of funding for AD programmes remain the United States and EU member countries. Funding is provided either through bilateral or multilateral programmes and is often channelled through the EU or UNODC and as part of drug control budgets. While other multilateral development assistance organizations provide support to development programmes in countries with illicit cultivation, these are usually not directly linked to drug control objectives. An exception, of course, is Afghanistan, where opium production has

become such a large part of the economy that any development assistance programme must take into account the causes and effects of illicit cultivation.²³

52. Another significant source of financial and technical support is trilateral cooperation for alternative development, where the funds from a Northern donor enable a Southern contributor to provide technical assistance to another Southern recipient, or South-South cooperation, where a developing country assists another developing country. The rationale is that those who have gone through similar experiences (such as countries like Peru and Thailand in the case of AD) can provide more relevant technical assistance to other countries at a comparable stage of development that face problems related to illicit cultivation.

53. A serious problem facing AD programmes is that traditional sources of funding are becoming scarcer as traditional donor countries face their own financial problems, drug control budgets of those countries are diverted to other types of programmes, and new and emerging challenges surface. Other innovative sources of funding may be needed, including funding from the private sector, as well as mainstreaming AD efforts into broader development programmes. Against this backdrop, national efforts must be strengthened and domestic spending on these programmes significantly increased.

54. Greater private sector participation in economic development, including efforts in social entrepreneurship, could help fill the gap and create greater and longer lasting impacts at the grassroots level than more traditional forms of AD funding. This move to private sector participation and to greater South-South cooperation with funding from mainstream development sources may well be enhanced if AD programmes are seen as offering a variety of economic and livelihood opportunities to beneficiaries, in addition to drug control. However, for this to take hold, good governance, rule of law and an environment conducive to investment must exist.

55. The multi-faceted nature of illicit crop cultivation requires a broad spectrum of cooperation and coordination amongst multisectoral stakeholders, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. However, the lack of agreement on concepts and approaches and differing expectations amongst stakeholders often leads to a void in terms of ownership and shared responsibilities in solving the problem. Therefore, cooperation between governments, the private sector and civil society organizations is highly important, especially in the exchange of information, best practices, and technical expertise and agreement on common standards and principles. Sharing best practices and promoting improved indicators of programme success would help to ensure that implementers — whether donors, recipient countries or implementing organizations — learn from other experiences and do not repeat past mistakes, in turn putting the livelihoods of the grassroots beneficiaries at risk.

²³ See the World Bank's *Interim Strategy Note for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which makes extensive references to the interconnection between poverty, illegal narcotics production, and security issues*: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLICUS/Resources/AFISN2009.pdf>.

J. The way forward

56. Decades of implementing AD programmes have revealed the complex nature of alternative development, provided better understanding of its challenges and success factors, and resulted in significant accumulation of lessons learned. Although cases of effective and sustainable AD programmes may seem far too few, the existing success stories provide evidence that AD, when carried out properly, is a promising approach to address the causes of and problems related to illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs, as well as other problems related to poverty and corresponding insecurities.

57. The development of a set of International Guiding Principles on Alternative Development may serve as a reference point for future AD interventions and guide policy formulation so that the lessons learned from years of financial and human investment can be leveraged in a way that improves the social, economic and political environment of small farmers and sustainably reduces illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs.
