

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Compilation of the outcome of the thematic debate of the Commission at its fifty-sixth session

Relevant part of the report on the fifty-sixth session (E/2013/28):

Round-table discussions on progress made in the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem

1. On 12 March 2013, the Commission considered agenda item 5, entitled “Round-table discussions on progress made in the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem”, comprising the following topics:

- (a) Demand reduction and related measures;
- (b) Supply reduction and related measures;
- (c) Countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation to enhance international cooperation.

2. For its consideration of agenda item 5, the Commission had before it the following:

- (a) Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the round-table discussions at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission (E/CN.7/2013/13);
- (b) Informal discussion notes distributed by the Chairs of the round-table discussions (E/CN.7/2013/CRP.1);
- (c) Background paper on international standards on drug use prevention (E/CN.7/2013/CRP.4).

Deliberations

Round table on demand reduction and related measures: drug prevention as a means to curb the world drug problem within the framework of a scientific evidence approach

3. The round table on the topic “Drug prevention as a means to curb the world drug problem within the framework of a scientific evidence approach” was chaired by Carmen Masías, President of the National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA) of Peru.

4. The Chair summarized the salient points of the round-table discussion as follows:

(a) Participants emphasized the importance of drug prevention as a pillar of a health-centred and balanced drug control system at the national and international levels. Such a system was mandated by the three international drug control conventions, which did not call for the criminalization of personal drug use, but for drug prevention, treatment and care;

(b) Some participants noted that violence related to drug trafficking was a growing problem that needed to be tackled through a balanced and comprehensive approach; the importance of practising the principle of common and shared responsibility was highlighted in this context;

(c) Member States stated that drug prevention should target groups and individuals that were particularly at risk, such as children and youth. Particular attention should also be paid to situations of social marginalization and poverty, which rendered people vulnerable to drug abuse. Participants described their ongoing prevention initiatives in diverse settings, such as families, schools and the workplace, as well as various types of awareness-raising activities, including through the media;

(d) Member States emphasized that it was crucial to reach people who had started to experiment with drugs in order to prevent their transitioning to drug dependence. Some participants noted that alcohol use could have a negative effect on drug prevention, as there was scientific evidence that it could function as a “gateway drug”, that is, it could lead to the abuse of other drugs. The growing problem posed by new psychoactive substances was also emphasized;

(e) Speakers noted that there was no “magic prevention formula” and that isolated or short-term interventions were not sufficient. Therefore, a range of interventions and policies was necessary, depending on the local context. This in turn required effective coordination among different sectors, including local communities and civil society;

(f) Participants emphasized that more scientific research was needed on the effectiveness of drug prevention interventions and policies, particularly in developing countries, as well as the development and use of methodologies for evaluating them. Speakers noted that it was also necessary to increase the technical capacity of providers of prevention services in some countries;

(g) Drug-prevention interventions and policies were viewed as effective and cost-effective in preventing drug use and its health and social consequences; nonetheless, drug prevention was often severely underfunded, a problem that needed to be tackled;

(h) Speakers emphasized that the 2014 high-level review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem could serve as an opportunity to evaluate more closely the existing challenges to effective drug prevention.

Round table on supply reduction and related measures: the importance of international cooperation, coordination and funding to promote relevant activities and programmes on all aspects of alternative development in support of the drug control regime established by the three international drug control conventions, within a broader international framework

5. The round table on the topic “The importance of international cooperation, coordination and funding to promote relevant activities and programmes on all aspects of alternative development in support of the drug control regime established by the three international drug control conventions, within a broader international framework” was chaired by Simona Marin (Romania), Third Vice-Chair of the Commission.

6. The Chair summarized the salient points of the round-table discussion as follows:

(a) The importance of the principle of common and shared responsibility and of a systemic approach to alternative development that takes into account the specific needs of different communities was reiterated;

(b) Support was expressed for the International Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, and Member States were called upon to use them in designing and implementing alternative development programmes;

(c) Participants noted the work and expertise of UNODC in the area of alternative development and called on UNODC to continue providing guidance and technical assistance, in cooperation with relevant international agencies;

(d) Speakers highlighted the importance of viewing alternative development as part of comprehensive drug control strategies, as well as its viable role in addressing poverty reduction, food security and socioeconomic development. Additionally, participants emphasized the need to incorporate alternative development into broader development approaches at the national and international levels;

(e) Participants emphasized the importance of a market-driven approach for products stemming from alternative development, considering their added value, as well as the need to ensure quality through the production chain linked to both national and international markets. It was noted that free-trade agreements were useful tools in marketing substitute crops;

(f) Speakers noted the need to identify key performance indicators and to conduct joint surveys and evaluations of alternative development projects, which would contribute to measuring programmes at the outcome and impact levels;

(g) Speakers referred to the need for cooperation with research centres to identify and ensure the use of economically viable, ecologically friendly and sustainable crops in alternative development;

(h) Participants emphasized the need to consider the environmental impact of alternative development interventions and to integrate environmental conservation into alternative development programmes;

(i) Participants expressed the importance of considering alternative development as a long-term endeavour, recognizing that no country or institution could address the issue on its own, and stressed the need for an integrated approach requiring the engagement of the broader development

community and the international financial institutions to ensure long-term financial sustainability;

(j) The importance of establishing special marketing regimes for products stemming from alternative development was also mentioned;

(k) Some participants noted that alternative development programmes should be implemented in conjunction with eradication activities and border controls when undertaking supply reduction activities;

(l) The need to broaden bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the area of alternative development, including a continued exchange of best practices and lessons learned within the framework of South-South cooperation, was highlighted;

(m) It was noted that, for alternative development to be successful, a number of preconditions might be required, including rule of law, law enforcement, safety and security, and access to basic social services, as well as infrastructure, such as irrigation systems.

Round table on countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation to enhance international cooperation: the importance of further strengthening the operational implementation of treaty-based provisions on international cooperation, including for countering money-laundering and preventing the illicit cross-border movement of cash and monetary instruments

7. The round table on the topic “The importance of further strengthening the operational implementation of treaty-based provisions on international cooperation, including for countering money-laundering and preventing the illicit cross-border movement of cash and monetary instruments” was chaired by Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol (Thailand), Second Vice-Chair of the Commission.

8. The Chair summarized the salient points of the round-table discussion as follows:

(a) Member States highlighted that the problems of drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and corruption were closely linked to money-laundering. They emphasized that a multidisciplinary approach was required

(b) Member States shared national experiences gained in countering money-laundering linked to trafficking in narcotic drugs and related crimes, including in undertaking a range of specific measures to prevent and combat money-laundering. They also highlighted challenges, good practices, and progress made in implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem;

(c) Some Member States noted that strong domestic legal regimes were required to address the problems of money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, and that such laws should be harmonized with international standards. Participants stated that such legislation needed to be more effectively implemented;

(d) In conducting financial investigations, it was noted that bank secrecy and tax havens continued to pose challenges. Several States underlined that simultaneous investigations related to money-laundering should be conducted in parallel with investigations related to predicate offences, such as drug trafficking and other criminal activities. Some Member

States referred to challenges related to proving the origin of funds and assets in cases of money-laundering and asset forfeiture;

(e) Member States noted the need to establish mechanisms in order to identify, investigate and seize criminal assets, and drew attention to the need to build the capacity of law enforcement agencies to perform those tasks. Several participants expressed the view that a good understanding of financial investigations was a necessary skill among key practitioners. Participants highlighted the benefits of recovering criminal assets and addressed the need for asset-sharing arrangements between States cooperating to confiscate the proceeds of crime. Non-conviction-based confiscation was mentioned as an example of good practice;

(f) Participants stated that collaboration and coordination across borders were essential in order to effectively tackle money-laundering, with a view to preventing safe havens for criminals. Participants stressed the importance of enhanced cooperation at the international, regional and national levels that was aimed at strengthening the sharing of information among relevant agencies, including financial intelligence units, police investigators, prosecutors and other criminal justice officials. Some Member States noted the need to create specialized anti-money-laundering units within law enforcement institutions and to provide specialized training for judges and prosecutors in order to effectively deal with money-laundering cases;

(g) Several participants emphasized that better use should be made of existing cooperation mechanisms and platforms, citing, for example, the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, which facilitated information-sharing between financial intelligence units. Many participants also urged Member States to share information between law enforcement agencies via formal and informal means;

(h) Member States urged greater regional and international cooperation through bilateral memorandums of understanding and arrangements for mutual legal assistance. The utility of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption in enhancing national legislation and promoting international cooperation against money-laundering and drug trafficking was stressed;

(i) The development and use of informal cooperation methods, such as joint training sessions, the placement of liaison officers and participation in informal regional networks, such as the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network, were encouraged. Some participants also recommended that UNODC continue its work in assisting Member States, including at the regional level, to implement international standards and norms for countering money-laundering.