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Addendum

Panel discussions on issues related to the scheduling of substances in accordance with the international drug control conventions and on substantive issues for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016

1. At its 7th and 8th meetings, on 18 March 2014, the Commission considered agenda item 8, which read as follows:

“Panel discussions:

“(a) Issues related to the scheduling of substances in accordance with the international drug control conventions;

“(b) Substantive issues for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016.”

2. The panel discussions were presided over by the Chair of the Commission and led by the following panellists: Fadila Fathy Amer (Egypt), Khalid Aljuboory (Iraq), Julián Wilches Guzmán (Colombia), Angela Scrutton (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Roberto Dondisch Glowinski (Mexico) and Peter Cahill (Canada).

3. The Chair of the Commission and the Chief of the Laboratory and Scientific Section of UNODC made introductory statements.

4. Statements were made by the representatives of China, Canada, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Australia, Israel, Colombia, Indonesia, Guatemala, Germany and Egypt.



5. Statements were also made by the observers for Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Uruguay and El Salvador.
6. The observers for IOGT International, Release, the Transnational Institute of Policy Studies and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (on behalf of the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs) also made statements.

Summary by the Chair

7. At the 9th meeting of the Commission, on 19 March 2014, the Chair summarized the salient points of the two panel discussions. Those summaries are reproduced below.

Issues related to the scheduling of substances in accordance with the international drug control conventions

8. Concern was expressed about the rise in substances of abuse (in particular new psychoactive substances) that were not controlled by the international drug control conventions but posed a threat to public health and presented challenges to the drug control mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels. Speakers highlighted that the international drug control conventions constituted flexible instruments for responding to the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances and that they needed to be fully explored by Member States in order to maximize the opportunities for action that they provided.
9. Concern was expressed by a number of speakers regarding the abuse of tramadol, a substance not currently under international control. The need to enhance the responses at the national and international levels in countering its abuse and cross-border trafficking was reiterated.
10. The importance of awareness-raising about the scheduling procedures contained in the international drug control conventions and the treaty-based functions provided to the Commission, WHO and the International Narcotics Control Board was underlined.
11. The initiation by States parties of the notification process for the international control of new substances under the international drug control conventions, such as the recent notifications submitted by the United Kingdom and China on mephedrone and ketamine, respectively, pursuant to article 2 of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, was welcomed. Reference was made to the possibility of applying voluntary provisional control measures to new substances while their control status was being examined by WHO, in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the international drug control conventions.
12. Speakers underlined the importance of data availability and welcomed the work undertaken on the Early Warning Advisory, set up by UNODC, in the identification of new psychoactive substances, and expressed their support for further enhancing international cooperation in the sharing of information on new psychoactive substances through existing mechanisms among Member States, as well as with other international bodies, including the International Narcotics Control Board and WHO.

13. Some participants emphasized the need to improve the alignment of the meetings of the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence of WHO with the sessions of the Commission, noting that the Committee should meet more frequently in order to enable a more timely response by the international community to the threat posed by new psychoactive substances. Participants referred to the need for prioritization of new psychoactive substances based on prevalence and harm and for providing relevant information, with a view to facilitating the assessment process undertaken by the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence.

14. The importance of the principle of common and shared responsibility in addressing the issue of new psychoactive substances was reiterated.

Substantive issues for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in 2016

15. Speakers welcomed the decision by the General Assembly to convene in early 2016 a special session on the world drug problem to review the progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

16. Speakers reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, in which 2019 had been established as the target date for the goals identified.

17. Speakers welcomed the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted during the high-level mid-term review, which was the result of an intensive negotiation process and based on broad ownership, and which had also identified priorities for further action and was to be used as a common starting point in preparing for the special session of the General Assembly in 2016.

18. The importance of a balanced, comprehensive, health-based approach was stressed, addressing both demand reduction and supply reduction and offering a vital role for prevention to play.

19. Several speakers said that the special session of the General Assembly should provide a platform for developing a new vision and new political discourse to tackle a problem that remained significant despite decades of concerted and honest efforts; that the special session needed to take into account current realities; that unilateral decisions taken recently required an international understanding on how to proceed; and that the drug issue was to be seen and addressed as a social issue that required new and creative solutions.

20. Many speakers reiterated the need to carry out the discussions within the framework of the three international drug control conventions, which had been proven to allow for flexibility in addressing the drug problem.

21. A number of specific agenda items were proposed for the special session, including new psychoactive substances, amphetamine-type stimulants and control of precursors. Among other issues mentioned were the importance of strengthening data collection; education, treatment and harm reduction; and the availability of, and access to, medicines for pain relief. Reference was also made to alternative

development and the adoption of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development. In this regard, the value of trying to focus on certain key issues, rather than trying to cover too broad an array of issues, was mentioned.

22. Speakers called upon the Commission, in preparing for the special session, to take a practical approach, strengthening the operational and global implementation of existing policy documents, making full use of available tools and sharing evidence and expertise that existed at the national and regional levels. It was also called upon to give special attention to the needs of the developing world and the importance of capacity-building in that regard.

23. The importance of a transparent and inclusive process was stressed, requiring coordination among health, justice, finance and law enforcement actors and requiring the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the scientific community, youth and the private sector.

24. The need to ensure the active involvement of civil society, both in the preparations for and during the special session, was underlined by many speakers, and reference was made to the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Commission, including the preparations for and the conduct of the high-level review held at the current session.

25. Many speakers urged that the best use be made of the technical expertise based in Vienna during the preparatory process, thereby taking into consideration the voices of a wide array of other United Nations agencies.

26. Many speakers underlined the important role of the Commission, as the United Nations organ with the prime responsibility for drug control matters, in the preparatory work for the special session. At the same time, while some speakers mentioned that it was up to the General Assembly to decide on the preparatory process, other speakers referred to the model used in preparing for the 1998 special session, and confidence was expressed that the Commission would prepare constructive recommendations for the special session.