

16 February 2018

English only

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**Commission on Narcotic Drugs****Sixty-first session**

Vienna, 12–16 March 2018

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016, including the seven thematic areas of the outcome document of the special session****Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Pedro Moitinho de Almeida, CND Facilitator for post-UNGASS Matters: Third round of thematic discussions on UNGASS Follow-up (September to November 2017)**

Provided below are concluding remarks for the third round of thematic discussions held by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on UNGASS implementation from 26–29 September, 16–18 October and 16 November 2017, in line with CND resolution 60/1 and the Commission's workplan of 30 June 2017.

**Background**

1. On 19 April 2016 the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of its special session on the world drug problem (resolution [S-30/1](#)). In the outcome document, Member States resolved to take the necessary steps to implement the operational recommendations contained in the document, in close partnership with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, and committed to share with the CND timely information on progress made in the implementation of these operational recommendations.
2. Following the adoption of the UNGASS outcome document, the CND initiated an intensive follow-up process, based on the principles of comprehensiveness and inclusiveness, with all seven thematic chapters of the UNGASS outcome document dealt with equally, and ample opportunities provided for all stakeholders to bring their expertise to the table, including United Nations entities and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations and civil society. A core part of that CND-led UNGASS follow-up process are the thematic discussions focused on the exchange of good practices, challenges and lessons learnt in the practical implementation of the UNGASS operational recommendations.
3. Three rounds of the Commission's thematic discussions have been held to date, in October 2016 and in January 2017, following a decision taken by the CND at its

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\* [E/CN.7/2018/1](#).



intersessional meeting on 8 September 2016 and its reconvened 59th session in December 2016 respectively, and from September to November 2017, according to the Commission's workplan of 30 June and in line with CND resolution 60/1, entitled "*Preparations for the sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2019*", with the Commission deciding to continue to hold intersessional meetings to further work on, and support Member States in, the implementation of the outcome document.

4. For the third round, for which one day was devoted to each of the seven thematic chapters, the Commission decided to organize panel discussions preceding the thematic debate for each chapter, aiming to facilitate an interactive debate, with five expert panellists nominated by the Regional Groups (one by each Regional Group), up to three panellists from United Nations entities, specialized organizations or intergovernmental organizations as well as one panellist from civil society.

5. While UNODC, as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem, participated in each of the panels, representatives of other United Nations entities, including UN Women, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as well as the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) participated alongside national experts and representatives of other intergovernmental and international organizations, as well as civil society organizations, in panels of thematic interest to them. Approximately 50 panellists shared their expertise; 125 statements were made by Member States and over 30 interventions delivered by civil society organizations from around the world, including via video messages.

6. The CND thematic discussions were webcast on the Commission's post-UNGASS website [www.ungass2016.org](http://www.ungass2016.org), allowing all interested stakeholders outside Vienna to follow the deliberations. In addition, presentations by panellists and delegations were, upon request, posted on the post-UNGASS website.

## **Facilitator's summary of the deliberations on the seven thematic chapters**

### **Operational recommendations on demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues (Chapter I)**

7. In the intersessional meeting on Tuesday, 26 September 2017 the Commission on Narcotic Drugs commenced with the third round of thematic discussions and focused its deliberations on the implementation of Chapter I of the UNGASS outcome document, operational recommendations on "demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues".

8. The consideration of Chapter I started with a panel discussion, opened by the UNODC Drug Prevention and Health Branch, and followed by interventions from experts from Nigeria, Singapore, Estonia and Portugal, representing the Regional Groups, representatives from UNAIDS and the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) as well as a representative from the Free Clinic Belgium, nominated by the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs. Additional UNODC expert presentations on the prevention and treatment of drug abuse as well as on the prevention, treatment and care of HIV among drug users were made during the thematic debate.

9. Many delegations and expert panellists reiterated the importance of acknowledging, as highlighted in the UNGASS outcome document, that drug addiction was a complex, multifactorial health disorder characterized by a chronic and relapsing nature with social causes and consequences that can be prevented and treated. In that regard, the importance of increasing the availability, coverage and

quality of scientific evidence-based prevention and treatment measures, including measures aimed at minimizing the adverse consequences of drug abuse, by some delegations referred to as harm reduction, was underscored. A number of delegations underlined the importance of working towards achieving a society free of drug abuse. Several delegations further called for addressing substance use disorder as a public health priority, reiterating that the underlying objective of the three international drug control treaties, constituting the corner stone of international drug policy, was to protect the health and welfare of humankind.

10. With the discussions focused on the prevention and treatment of drug use disorders, delegations highlighted the complementary nature of these strategies and the importance of ensuring a balanced approach to their implementation as well as the provision of adequate resources. Many delegations reiterated their strong commitment to implementing a comprehensive set of measures, which include inter alia prevention, early intervention, treatment and care, social reintegration, rehabilitation and recovery measures, taking into account age, gender and other relevant aspects of target groups.

11. In this context, the importance of providing national drug policies tailored to the specific needs of individuals, families and communities, was underlined with Member States sharing national good practices targeting in particular children and young people. Education and active involvement of the community, the move from stand-alone campaigns and risk information provision in schools to investing in community based interventions and programmes aimed at improving social and coping skills, were highlighted to have positively impacted national demand reduction efforts in a number of countries. Several delegations reported on positive results emanating from targeted sports, cultural and leisure time activities targeted particularly at young people and children. Other national initiatives shared, included inter alia the establishment of national youth ambassador programmes, raising awareness in educational settings, the introduction of age appropriate drug prevention curricula or the organization of debates and competitions, including video or essay competitions. In addition, good practices in awareness raising were shared with regard to the use of traditional media, newspaper, television or radio, as well as social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to raise awareness and provide information on the risks of drug abuse. Social media was considered by many delegations as an important tool to reach youth, including those young people outside of the school system.

12. Public awareness raising campaigns in general were reported by a number of delegations as an important measure to support national drug demand reduction efforts, with some delegations reporting on national campaigns focused on reducing the stigma that negatively impacts people who use drugs and which may result in social marginalization. In that context, some delegations reported on targeted initiatives to reduce the stigma associated with drug abuse, developed and implemented in close cooperation with the private sector, communities and civil society, to inter alia support reintegration efforts.

13. The importance of the provision of treatment by the national public health system as well as efforts to ensure non-discriminatory access to all treatment interventions was underlined, with a number of delegations sharing information on the introduction of services and increased access opportunities for populations at risk, in line with the respective UNGASS provisions. In addition, many delegations underlined the importance of applying internationally recognized standards in their national efforts, including the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention and the UNODC-WHO International Standards on the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders.

14. In terms of enhancing the efficacy of prevention and treatment measures, the importance of cooperation, at all levels, including at the national level, was highlighted, with some delegations informing about the establishment of national councils, committees or networks that enhance the collaboration among relevant national authorities. In that regard, a number of delegations further underscored the

importance of enhancing cooperation among the government and the private sector and civil society in a concerted effort to addressing the world drug problem.

15. Many Member States shared good practices in effectively implementing measures aimed at minimizing the adverse consequences of drug abuse, by a number of delegations referred to as harm reduction measures, including needle syringe exchange programmes; opioid substitution programmes, including methadone maintenance therapy and peer-based interventions, as part of a comprehensive response to addressing the world drug problem. Some delegations also referred to heroin assisted therapy, or the establishment of drug consumption rooms aiming to facilitate access for people who use drugs to treatment opportunities and other social services, as an effective part of their overall demand reduction strategy. Other delegations shared successful national experiences inter alia with regard to abstinence oriented addiction treatment programmes, informing about rehabilitation efforts in the community or in residential facilities, drug rehabilitation centres, as well as outpatient services, aiming to support drug abstinence, coupled with learning new and adaptive skills of coping. Effective treatment responses to the abuse of NPS, including synthetic opioids, were mentioned to be very challenging by some Member States.

16. Regarding access to prevention and treatment services in prisons and after imprisonment, some delegations reported on targeted programmes, with information shared about the application of differentiated approaches, including an assessment of the level of drug dependence and severity, psychological needs, taking into consideration age, gender and learning styles in the provision of targeted treatment. Some delegations underlined that successful reintegration into society required not only rehabilitation programmes but included the provision of access to social capital through inter alia employment, accommodation and strengthening of family or community relationships.

17. Several delegations highlighted the importance of enhancing measures aimed at preventing the transmission of HIV and viral hepatitis associated with drug use, including in prisons, in particular with reference to the implementation of the technical guide for countries to set targets for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care for injecting drug users, by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. A number of delegations reported on national programmes, including the introduction of methadone maintenance therapy or needle syringe exchange programmes, to have positively contributed to the reduction in HIV infections at the national level. The importance of zero mother to child transmission of HIV in prisons was highlighted as well.

18. With the commitment to developing drug policies and programmes based on evidence and best practice, supported by objective monitoring and evaluation, the importance of research, data collection and sharing was highlighted throughout the discussion on the implementation of Chapter I, with some delegations informing about the introduction of new surveys to monitor usage trends and support demand reduction efforts or the establishment of drug observatories.

19. In terms of opioid overdose management, some delegations informed about significant national public health challenges, with one delegation referring to an “opioid epidemic”, related inter alia to the abuse of prescription drugs, including substances containing fentanyl and its derivatives. Reported measures by Member States aimed at addressing this growing challenge in some parts of the world included the introduction of new legislation, (for example a Good Samaritan Overdose Acts, providing certain legal protections for individuals who seek emergency medical help during a drug overdose), or the establishment of national prescription databases to address the misuse of prescription drugs. Delegations further shared information on national approaches to address the overdoses, mortality and other drug related harms, inter alia through the provision of naloxone, including support initiatives such as take-home naloxone programmes or initiatives aimed at making naloxone more easily

available to medical personnel, community organizations or family members of affected citizens.

20. Some delegations reported on national approaches taken, including the decriminalization of drug abuse. A delegation also provided more information on ongoing national plans to legalizing the personal possession of small amounts of in particular cannabis. Furthermore, another delegation informed about the intention to look into the option of a regulated commercial industry for the production and sale of cannabis, while focusing on reducing the demand and potential risks associated with its use.

21. In relation to demand reduction and related measures, delegations encouraged a continued promotion of the cooperation with and among relevant United Nations entities, through inter alia the organization of joint events by the CND with other governing bodies (such as the World Health Assembly), as well as coordination meetings with relevant United Nations entities, including UNODC, WHO and UNAIDS.

### **Operational recommendations on ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion (Chapter II)**

22. The thematic discussions continued on Wednesday, 27 September 2017 with the consideration of the operational recommendations contained in Chapter II, “ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion”. For the panel discussion, preceding the interactive debate, experts from Kenya, Mexico, Belgium, representing the regional groups, representatives from the UNODC Drug Prevention and Health Branch, WHO and INCB, as well as from the European Association for Palliative Care, representing civil society, were invited to discuss the practical implementation of the respective operational recommendations.

23. With the availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, remaining low to non-existent in many countries of the world, delegations reiterated their strong commitment to enhancing national efforts and international cooperation at all levels. The importance of better understanding existing barriers to access and availability, giving adequate attention to raising awareness and capacity building of and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders as well as to promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices, were highlighted as important elements in effectively implementing the respective commitments made in the UNGASS outcome document.

24. Many delegations expressed strong support for the efforts of the UNODC, WHO and INCB in providing technical guidance and assistance to addressing existing barriers with a view to enhancing the availability of and accessibility to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. In that respect, a number of delegations underlined the importance of promoting joint initiatives and enhanced cooperation among relevant United Nations entities, including the UNODC-WHO-UICC Joint Global Programme on increasing access to controlled medicines for medical purposes and commended the inclusion of access to controlled medicines in the Memorandum of Understanding that had been signed between UNODC and WHO early 2017. UNODC was further commended for the organization of an expert group meeting on the matter in September 2017. Regular exchange with and briefings by UNODC and WHO to the Commission were highlighted as an important tool to facilitate timely, informed and coordinated scheduling decisions by the CND.

25. Many delegations highlighted the importance of striking a balance between ensuring the availability of internationally controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, and avoiding their misuse and diversion into illicit channels. In that regard, a number of delegations underscored the dual obligation of the international drug control conventions, underlining that the

effective implementation of the provisions contained therein would provide adequate guarantees to ensuring availability and access while prevent the misuse and diversion.

26. Among the existing barriers to the availability and accessibility of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, mentioned were limitations in training of the healthcare workforce, fear of patients developing drug use disorders, fear of diversion, limitations of dispensing outlets, inefficient supply chains, as well as any social or cultural barriers that might exist. To address such barriers, a number of delegations encouraged the continuous sharing of information on initiatives and best practices, including effective administration and distribution of controlled substances for medical purposes. Member States further shared national good practices including the introduction of national electronic prescription systems, measures taken to diversify the main distribution of substances in both urban and rural area, or the development of information systems to streamline and expedite applications for license registration for medical practitioners, importers, exporters, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers involved in the handling of controlled substances.

27. In addition, delegations reported on initiatives to improve national communication, coordination and oversight, or changes in national legislation to simplify prescription processes and allow prolonged treatment using controlled substances, including in rural areas. Lifting taxes on essential medicines, including morphine, the conducting of surveys to better estimate the licit consumption and needs of controlled substances, and the establishment of national facilities to provide for the required national quantity, were measures presented to Member States for further exploration with the potential to positively impact the availability of and access to substances for medical purposes.

28. Many delegations underlined that ensuring adequate availability of and access to controlled substances required a thorough engagement from all relevant stakeholders, including patients and their families, with a number of Member States informing about the importance of national public awareness raising campaigns on the adequate use of controlled substances and the use of pain medication.

29. The provision of technical assistance, capacity-building and training was further reported to positively affect the implementation of the operational recommendations. Many delegations reported on national efforts to provide regular training and seminars for health care professionals, including pharmacists, on the adequate access to and use of controlled substances for medical purposes. Trainings were reported to take the form of e-learning activities, the provision of technical guides or the holding of group trainings. In that context, a number of delegations reported on exploring public-private partnerships that expand the role of both researches and the pharmaceutical industry as it pertains to customer sale, purchasing habits, and patterns of use, misuse and dependence, in order to strengthen tracking systems, pharmacy dispensing practice and prescription procedures, treatment protocols, public health and drug information campaigns.

30. Some delegations reported on the provision of targeted national trainings and seminars on pain relief and palliative care for relevant stakeholders. One delegation informed about the rollout of a specialized university course on national and international palliative care, and highlighted the importance of close cooperation and coordination between the ministry of health and the national hospices and palliative care associations in that regard.

31. In addition, some Member States touched upon the matter of affordability, and highlighted that this should be adequately addressed in the implementation of the operational recommendations of Chapter II. In addition, delegations highlighted the importance of regularly reviewing and updating the Model Lists of Essential Medicines by the World Health Organization, with some delegations reporting on the introduction and continuous update of their national model lists.

32. A number of delegations underscored that public health challenges, including the current opioid crisis in certain parts of the world, should not negatively impact

the commitment to enhance access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while underscoring the importance of ensuring a transparent prescription process.

33. A number of Member States shared national steps taken to legalize the use of cannabis for medical purposes, including for the treatment of neuropathic pain as well as palliative care. These measures were reported to be complemented by public awareness raising campaigns to inform the public about potential risks.

**Operational recommendations on cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, children, women and communities (Chapter IV)**

34. The thematic discussions on Thursday, 28 September 2017 focused on Chapter IV on “cross-cutting issues, human rights, youth, children, women and communities”. Experts from Angola, the Netherlands, the UNODC Justice Section, as well as UN Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as a representative from the Nepal Concerned Center, representing civil society, formed the expert panel preceding the thematic debate on Chapter IV. Additional UNODC expert presentations were held focusing on children with substance abuse problems and juvenile justice, gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment; as well as alternatives to punishment and incarceration.

35. The strong commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting all human rights, fundamental freedoms and the inherent dignity of all individuals and the rule of law in the development and implementation of drug policies, was highlighted. Some delegations called for the implementation of more humane policies and programmes, in line with the three pillars of the United Nations, Human Rights, Peace and Security, and Development. A number of delegations underlined the importance of striking a balance and minimizing the abuse of drugs and the harm caused by drugs to society. Several delegations highlighted the need to ensure non-discriminatory access to health, care and social services in prevention, primary care and treatment programmes and encouraged the support for approaches designed to deter illicit drug use and promote policies addressing public health concerns.

36. Many delegations underlined the importance of promoting a balanced, comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing the world drug problem, with delegations encouraging Member States to consider sharing information, through the Commission, with regard to the promotion of human rights and the health, safety and welfare of all individuals, communities and society in the context of the domestic implementation of the drug control conventions, as well as lessons learnt, experiences and best practices on the design and implementation of proportionate criminal justice policies, as well as alternatives to conviction or punishment for drug-related offences in appropriate cases of a minor nature, in compliance with the implementation of the three international drug control conventions.

37. Good practices were shared concerning the national implementation of the operational recommendations, including the implementation of practical measures tailored to the specific needs of women, children, youth and other vulnerable members of society. The importance of integrating a gender perspective into all relevant aspects of drug policies and the continuum relating to care was highlighted by many delegations. Some delegations reported on amending or introducing new legislation with a view to enhancing the provision of comprehensive voluntary treatment and support services. In addition, information on treatment programmes for children with due regard for their specific needs and the opportunity for schooling during treatment, was shared.

38. Taking into account the specific needs of women in relation to the world drug problem, some delegations informed about the establishment of dedicated treatment centres for women with access to adequate health services and counselling, including those needed during pregnancy. Some delegations mentioned that women often got involved in drug-related crimes, including as low-level couriers, due to financial dependency or in the face of economic constraints.

39. A number of delegations called for promoting proportionate national sentencing policies and practices for drug related offences, whereby the severity of penalties was to be proportionate to the gravity of the offences and in line with the obligations under international law. Many delegations reported on steps taken to implement recommendations on proportionate and effective policies and responses for drug-related offences, including alternatives to incarceration, by focusing on treatment, education, aftercare, rehabilitation and social reintegration as well as the implementation of age and gender appropriate interventions targeted to the specific needs of vulnerable members of society, in particular women and children. Alternatives to conviction or punishment for drug-related offences in appropriate cases of a minor nature reported by delegations ranged inter alia from referral to treatment, administrative measures, suspension of proceedings conditional on pursuing treatment, substitution of imprisonment for non-custodial measures, suspension of sentences, and referral to so called drug treatment courts, which were operating in some countries, and which were currently under evaluation in others.

40. Approaches designed to deter illicit drug use and promote policies addressing public health concerns were shared. Information was provided on national approaches rooted in the principle of alternatives to imprisonment for drug use and possession for personal use, with possession and use remaining illegal but not being considered a criminal offence. It was reported that domestically decriminalizing drug use and possession without legalizing it, along with the provision of a continuum of support, prevention and treatment measures, resulted in a decrease in overall drug use and the drug-induced mortality rate.

41. Regarding the quality of drug treatment and rehabilitation services and their compliance with human rights, some delegations informed about the introduction of internal supervision, including by authorities responsible for the adherence to human rights, as well as the application of minimum standards.

42. Different views were expressed on the application of the death penalty for drug-related crimes. In addition, a number of delegations referred to drug-related extrajudicial killings and underscored that the conduct of criminal investigations and judicial proceedings by the State with full respect for the process was a human right pursuant to the provisions of international law and in accordance with the principles of rule of law.

43. The importance of CND's cooperation with relevant partners, including for example the Human Rights Council, relevant United Nations entities, and civil society, was highlighted.

**Operational recommendations on supply reduction and related measures; effective law enforcement; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation (Chapter III)**

44. The implementation of the operational recommendations on supply reduction and related measures; effective law enforcement; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation, contained in Chapter III of the outcome document, were in the centre of discussions at the intersessional meeting of the Commission on Monday, 16 October 2017. The UNODC Organized Crime Branch opened the panel discussion and sharing expertise throughout the intersessional meeting, and expert panellists from Nigeria, Malaysia, Estonia and Turkey shared insights into national efforts. An expert panellist from the European Commission presented an intergovernmental approach and a representative from the organization Action Solidaire de la Jeunesse par le Développement Communautaire, nominated by the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, shared the civil society perspective.

45. Many delegations advocated for promoting, through the Commission, increased efforts in the prevention of drug-related crime as well as joint efforts to counter the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, through inter alia strengthening capacity building, technical assistance, training, information exchange,

coordinated operations, the use of portals and networks for sharing of information and intelligence as well as national, regional and international responses to address links between drug trafficking, corruption, money laundering, and, in some cases, terrorism, and other forms of organized crime.

46. The importance of promoting a balanced and comprehensive approach to supply and demand reduction, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, in line with the commitments made in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement and the commitments made in the UNGASS outcome document, was reiterated by many delegations. A number of delegations further underlined the need to implement supply reduction measures that include preventive measures addressing, inter alia, the criminal justice and socioeconomic-related factors that may facilitate, drive, enable and perpetuate organized and drug-related crime. In that regard, some delegations shared information on initiatives taken that involve law enforcement authorities in awareness raising and prevention initiatives, working closely with their communities.

47. Sharing of information and best practices, promoting the cooperation of law enforcement authorities at all levels, as well as strengthening the work at the regional level was highlighted. The importance of monitoring existing trafficking routes and identifying new routes, as well as utilizing relevant regional and international networks for the exchange of operational information, was mentioned. Several delegations reported on the establishment of national task forces, councils, committees, or interdepartmental groups with a view to enhancing coordination and partnership among relevant national authorities at all levels as well as to improve timely intelligence and information sharing. Some delegations reported on good practices in the establishment of a national “forum” for regular information exchange among all relevant partners, resulting in more effective supply reduction measures, including the identification of illicit laboratories or the seizure of larger quantities of illicit substances. Some delegations shared information on national initiatives to address the challenge of drug trafficking in connection with the financing of terrorism.

48. Information was shared on current trends, threats and national measures, including details on methods of concealment related to the trafficking of drugs, information on successful operations leading to the seizure of illicit substances, assets and to the arrests of suspects, as well as information on substances that are of particular concern for national authorities, including new psychoactive substances and methamphetamines. Some delegations highlighted the need for the international community to address the challenges faced in particular by transit countries.

49. Many delegations reported on efforts to enhance the exchange of information and intelligence among law enforcement and border control agencies and to strengthen their capacities and reported on successful joint investigations and coordinated operations to intercept drugs trafficked including through the support of UNODC programmes, such as CRIMJUST, Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) and the Container Control Programme (CCP). Following a presentation on the UNODC WCO Container Control Programme, information was provided on the upgrading of port facilities, the training of customs officials as well as measures to secure the ports, including through scanning containers, using drug-dogs or body scanners. Delegations highlighted that the participation in international joint efforts has led to improved coordination at the national level. UNODC was commended for the support provided and encouraged to further enhance its cooperation with relevant partners, including, WCO or INTERPOL. Member States informed about bilateral provision of capacity building to support partner countries in their supply reduction efforts, in addition to information shared on training and technical assistance provided by UNODC.

50. Some delegations reported on equipping competent national authorities, including health ministries, with the necessary tools to quickly react and place new and potentially dangerous substances under control, pending a comprehensive review and decision on permanent measures. Information was shared on targeted supply

reduction efforts in response to the challenges of increased abuse of opioids, addressing the trafficking of illicitly-produced opioids such as fentanyl, with measures including a change in legislation providing border control officials and law enforcement authorities with the necessary tools to control imported and exported mail, as well as the introduction of additional controls for the import of designated devices used in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals. The increased use of postal services for trafficking of illicit substances was mentioned by a number of delegations as a major challenge.

51. A number of Member States underlined the role of the dark net as facilitator for various criminal activities, including the illicit trade in drugs, highlighting the importance of taking into consideration the role of the Internet, cyberspace and new technologies in general. Some delegations reported increased incidents related to the trafficking of new psychoactive substances using new technologies.

52. Many delegations underscored their commitment to enhancing financial investigations and the focus on confiscation and recovery of proceeds of crime, including money laundering, corruption, and other criminal activities. Some delegations reported on positive results focusing on criminal assets, by launching financial investigation as part of a routine measure when investigating organized crime incidents. In that regard, several delegations underscored the need to maximize the effectiveness of law enforcement measures, in particular focusing on individuals and organizations responsible of illicit activities of a large scale.

53. Information was further shared on steps taken to adapt national legislative frameworks and legal responses with a view to complying with international standards and commitments in related areas, including revised regulations on fire arms possession, enhancement of prosecution, conviction and penalizing criminal acts such as money laundering, corruption, and illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

**Operational recommendations on cross-cutting issues in addressing and countering the world drug problem: evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats, including new psychoactive substances, in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and other relevant international instruments (Chapter V)**

54. On Tuesday, 17 October 2017, the Commission continued the thematic discussions and focused its deliberations on the implementation of the operational recommendations contained in Chapter V of the UNGASS outcome document, entitled: “cross-cutting issues in addressing and countering the world drug problem: Evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats, including new psychoactive substances, in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and other relevant international instruments”. For the panel discussion, the regional groups were represented by experts from Colombia, Mexico, Canada and the Netherlands. Other panellists represented the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch, the INCB, the WHO, the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), as well as the Golden Colombia Foundation, selected as panellist by the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs. UNODC expert presentations focused on the implementation of the Commission’s scheduling decisions, the annual report questionnaire, as well as the diversification of drug markets and their increasing intersection.

55. Information on good practices, challenges and lessons learnt were shared with regard to the implementation of the operational recommendations with regard to new psychoactive substances, amphetamine-type stimulants, including methamphetamine, the diversion of precursors and pre-precursors and the non-medical use and misuse of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; the use of the internet in relation to drug-related activities; as well as evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats.

56. The challenge of new psychoactive substances was one of the key issues discussed. It was emphasized by many delegations that NPS were in high demand, including as less expensive replacements for traditional narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In addition, it was stressed that NPS were easy to manufacture and transport and could be modified with little effort to circumvent regulatory controls, making it challenging for national and international control systems to ensure timely analysis and scheduling of substances that may pose a risk to public health. Some delegations identified knowledge gaps and capacity constraints as hindering an effective and timely national response to the threats posed by NPS. The growing number of synthetic drug laboratories was reported to be a challenge for a number of countries. Some delegations underlined that a considerable number of new psychoactive substances could be produced requiring only common laboratory equipment and basic knowledge of chemistry, making those clandestine laboratories difficult to detect and dismantle. It was further reported that the potency and purity of illicit substances, including NPS, was observed in to be increasing, making the handling and preparation of such substances more dangerous, increasing the risk of overdose and accidental exposure, as well as complicating the identification and detection of such substances for law enforcement, with small volume packages being easier to conceal and transport.

57. While many delegations reported on an increasing number of new psychoactive substances detected in the last few years, a number of delegations highlighted that the overall number of new detections for 2017 was slightly lower than in previous years. For other Member States NPS represented a new challenge, only starting to emerge more frequently on their national markets. Those reporting a decline of new NPS detected, attributed this positive development predominately to the implementation of initiatives taken, inter alia the introduction of blanket bans, generic and analogue based legislation or other measures that target producers of NPS.

58. A number of delegations highlighted the importance of implementing a balanced approach in addressing NPS, aiming at developing a scientific-evidence based health response and training on the prevention and treatment of NPS, including in prison settings. In this regard, the Commission was commended for the adoption of its resolution 60/4, entitled "*Preventing and responding to the adverse health consequences and risks associated with the use of new psychoactive substances*", which requested the UNODC, the WHO and other relevant international and regional organizations, to incorporate toxicological data into the UNODC early warning advisory system, in order to provide information on the adverse health consequences of the use of new psychoactive substances.

59. As regards efforts undertaken to strengthen domestic national legislative, regulatory, administrative and operational responses in addressing the challenge of new psychoactive substances, many delegations shared details on national voluntary measures or provisional controls of substances. A number of delegations called for enhanced provision of capacity building and technical assistance in order to improve data collection at the national and international levels, as well as to encourage States to share information, including toxicological data. Some delegation underlined the importance of the provision of equipment and technology, including for the purpose of identification, forensic analysis and assessment of NPS-related challenges, and called upon UNODC to assist Member States in developing appropriate tools and responses to NPS. Other delegations reported on the establishment of drug observatories and national early warning systems, in close cooperation with international partners, to address the emerging trend of synthetic NPS.

60. With a view to supporting scientific evidence-based review and scheduling of the most prevalent, persistent and harmful substances, delegations underlined the importance of closely cooperating with the UNODC, WHO and INCB with a view to ensuring informed and timely scheduling decisions and a timely response in particular to the challenge of NPS. In this regard, delegations reiterated their call to promote enhanced data collection and information-sharing and the use of early warning systems, in particular the Early Warning Advisory on new psychoactive substances

and the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) programme of UNODC, and INCB tools, with a view to ensure the dissemination of reports and analyses related to NPS trends, enhancing the effectiveness of international scheduling by the Commission and build capacity to implement international scheduling decisions and international cooperation. A new toxicology module for the UNODC early warning advisory was presented, aiming to facilitate the sharing of toxicological data on the health consequences and harms of NPS. The necessity of enhancing the active cooperation among forensic laboratories, customs authorities, law enforcement and public health services to ensure a timely exchange of information and intelligence, including on toxicological data was highlighted by many delegations.

61. UNODC and the Commission were commended for their collaboration with other intergovernmental bodies, in particular the United Nations Statistical Commission, with a view to enhance data collection and sharing. Some delegations welcomed the UNODC Expert consultation on the improvement of drug statistics and to strengthen the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) scheduled to be held in early 2018.

62. A number of Member States reported an increasing appearance of new potent synthetic opioids, mostly fentanyl analogues, synthetic cannabinoids, cathinones or phenethylamines on the markets, potentially leading to an increase of overdose related deaths in some parts of the world. Several Member States that had so far not been affected by the increasing appearance of fentanyl analogues on national markets, reported on developing training courses including for law enforcement, custom officers, or postal service employees, to be prepared for this potentially emerging challenge. Some delegations reported also on an increase in the use of amphetamine type stimulants, in particular among young people and in urban areas.

63. Some delegations reported on the growing challenge of non-medical use and misuse of pharmaceuticals, containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and underlined the importance of controlling the trade and distribution of pharmaceuticals through all channels. A number of delegations reported on the introduction of electronic systems for the prescription of pharmaceuticals to prevent their misuse and diversion into illicit channels. As regards the misuse and diversion into illicit channels of precursors and pre-precursors, delegations underlined the importance of enhancing the cooperation, in particular between importing and exporting countries.

64. Many delegations highlighted the need to continue addressing challenges and opportunities related to the use of the Internet, with some delegations underlining that the Internet was considered a key facilitator for various criminal activities, including illicit drug-related activities. This would be further facilitated through encryption, crypto-currencies and increased volumes of goods delivered by postal services. It was further reported that mobile and internet applications, including WhatsApp or Skype were increasingly misused for illicit drug-related activities. The importance of close cooperation and collaboration with national and international partners, including through joint operations, as well as the need for technical assistance, technology transfer and capacity building to enhance the skills and capacity of national authorities, was highlighted. Some delegations reported on the organization of national workshops and training courses, as well as the increased monitoring of the darknet through law enforcement with a view to gaining a better understanding of market behaviour and abuse patterns, including of NPS. Other delegations shared examples of successful joint cross-border operations that had resulted in the close-down of major drug-selling networks on the darknet.

65. A number of delegations highlighted that the increased use of the Internet also provided a key opportunity to use the internet and social media as platform for demand reduction interventions, with the potential to extend the reach and geographic coverage of prevention initiatives. Some delegations reported on using the internet or other mobile applications to inform the public about risks of specific substances,

including NPS, that have been identified through national or international early warning systems and may cause a risk to public health.

66. Regarding evolving and existing trends and challenges, some delegations underlined the importance of building consensus towards policies that take into account national priorities and needs, building upon the consensus reached with the adoption of the UNGASS outcome document, leading to a better understanding of the socioeconomic consequences of the world drug problem.

**Operational recommendations on alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues (Chapter VII)**

67. On Wednesday, 18 October 2017, participants shared good practices, challenges and lessons learnt with a view to the implementation of the operational recommendations contained in Chapter VII of the UNGASS outcome document focused on “alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues”. Expert panellists from Nigeria, Thailand and Germany shared their views on the implementation of the recommendations and were joined by panellists from the Sustainable Livelihood Unit of UNODC, the UNDP country office in Afghanistan, and a civil society representative from the International Drug Policy Consortium, speaking on behalf of the Myanmar Opium Farmers Forum. Throughout the thematic debate following the panel discussion, presentations on alternative development initiatives and programmes were made by UNODC experts from Vienna and the field.

68. The commitment to strengthening subregional, regional and international cooperation to support comprehensive and sustainable alternative development programmes as an essential part of successful prevention and crop control strategies was reiterated, especially in the areas most affected by, or at risk, of illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. A number of delegations recalled that alternative development continued to be a fundamental pillar of addressing and countering the world drug problem, taking into account the United Nations Guidelines on Alternative Development, with UNGASS linking it also to the broader framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

69. It was highlighted that while alternative development had predominately been seen as a net illicit crop reduction or elimination strategy, the concept had evolved over time, with the growing recognition of the importance of gaining a better understanding of the drivers of illicit cultivation and the need to address underlying socioeconomic factors, embedding alternative development policies and programmes in a broader development perspective, taking into account demographic, cultural, social and geographic considerations.

70. Several delegations stressed the need to ensure a holistic approach to alternative development, including, where applicable, preventive alternative development also with a view to strengthening the rule of law, accountable, effective and inclusive institutions and public service, as well as democracy and poverty-eradication, providing support in particular for vulnerable members of society, who were more likely to be affected by illicit drug-related activities.

71. The significance of promoting sustainable alternative development initiatives that foster the empowerment, ownership and responsibility of affected communities and of ensuring viable economic alternatives for communities affected by illicit drug-related activities was underscored by a number of delegations. It was further highlighted by several Member States that law enforcement was a key component of a comprehensive and balanced package of interventions which were to be based on long-term and flexible funding. The positive impact generated through the integration of communities of affected regions into the economic and social development of the country, was mentioned, with several delegations reporting on effective national or

regional interventions, which in addition to the provision of trainings and capacity building were focused on the enhancement of infrastructure, access to roads, schools, primary health care services or electricity.

72. UNODC's key role in supporting Member States with the development, implementation and evaluation of alternative development programmes and initiatives was welcomed, and the Office was encouraged to continue to enhance the cooperation with other relevant United Nations entities, within their mandates, with a view to supporting the effective implementation of the operational recommendations related to alternative development. A number of Member States further stressed the necessity of partnerships with the private sector, international financial institutions and producers, with a view to fostering licit economic development, ensuring access to markets for products stemming from alternative development, including preventive alternative development, while also ensuring a sustainable use of natural resources.

73. With regard to enhancing access of alternative development products to international markets, a number of delegations informed about the introduction of preference schemes, ensuring preferential conditions for the sale or import of products stemming from alternative development. Good practices were further shared on the cooperation that existed between national ministries, UNODC and other relevant United Nations entities aimed at improving local economies as a sustainable alternative to illicit crop cultivation, taking into consideration the social and cultural characteristics of each community in a region.

74. A number of delegations called upon the international community to increase voluntary cooperation and coordination in the field of alternative development, including through the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learnt. The need to promote technical assistance and capacity building for requesting Member States was highlighted, with delegations welcoming the Commission's recommendation to the Economic and Social Council to adopt resolution 2017/20.<sup>1</sup> It was highlighted that more research was needed to better understand and identify factors contributing to the emergence of illicit crop cultivation and to improve impact assessments of alternative development programmes, commending UNODC for presenting its findings on the impact assessment of alternative development programmes, data gathering and analysis.

75. Delegations further discussed the concept of urban alternative development referenced in the UNGASS outcome document, underlining the need to implement development interventions in urban settings that address the manufacture, production and trafficking of illicit substances, as well as the resulting violence. Some delegations reported on implementing initiatives and programmes for those affected by the cultivation of illicit drugs and drug trafficking in urban areas, including through comprehensive training programmes, such as vocational training. For the purpose of developing a better understanding of the concept and the different factors contributing to illicit drug related activities in urban and rural areas, the necessity for further research and cooperation was emphasized. A number of delegations welcomed the joint UNODC and Member States' initiative to convene a series of expert group consultations to further discuss the concept and evaluate if and how traditional alternative development initiatives could be transferred into or adapted to an urban context.

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<sup>1</sup> ECOSOC resolution 2017/20 on promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development and related commitments, calling upon Member States to apply the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development when designing, implementing and evaluating alternative development programmes and projects, and to share outcomes, assessments of implemented projects and lessons learned, thereby contributing to the dissemination and application of the Guiding Principles.

**Operational recommendations on strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility (Chapter VI)**

76. On Thursday, 16 November 2017, the Commission discussed the implementation of Chapter VI, containing operational recommendations on strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. On the panel preceding the interactive debate, experts from Malaysia, Panama, the European Commission, the UNODC Division for Operations, and a representative of a non-governmental organization nominated by the Vienna NGO Committee, discussed the implementation of the commitments made under Chapter VI. Presentation by UNODC experts from the regional desks were made throughout the thematic discussion and included video messages from Office's regional representatives. In addition, the Secretary to the Commission made a presentation, outlining efforts to support the Commission in strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, including (i) the Commission's contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (ii) the work of its subsidiary bodies, (iii) an initiative to organize UNGASS implementation workshops, and (iv) the development of a good practice portal to retain and collect the valuable information gathered.

77. Delegations reiterated their strong commitment to addressing the world drug problem in a multilateral setting, through effective and increased international cooperation, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. Given the complex nature of the world drug problem, it was underlined by many delegations that coordination was essential at all levels. There needed to be a continuous process of collaboration, enabling Member States effectively respond to global challenges.

78. A number of delegations reiterated that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address and counter the world drug problem were complementary and mutually reinforcing as outlined in the UNGASS outcome document, with some delegations underlining that the CND had an important role to play in following up and supporting the thematic review of the Sustainable Development Goals directly linked to its work.

79. Delegations commended UNODC for its work in supporting Member States in addressing and countering the world drug problem, in particular the technical assistance provided on all aspects of drug policy. A number of delegations reiterated the call made in the UNGASS outcome document to continue efforts to enhance coherence within the United Nations system at all levels, as well as with relevant domestic sectors, as further highlighted in CND resolution 60/6, entitled "*Intensifying coordination and cooperation among United Nations entities and relevant domestic sectors, including the health, education and criminal justice sectors, to address and counter the world drug problem*". The importance of having the CND and UNODC, in their respective leading roles, closely cooperating and collaborating with all relevant United Nations entities, other international organizations and civil society was emphasized by many delegations and the call upon relevant United Nations entities and specialized agencies to support the implementation of UNGASS, within their respective mandates, thereby avoiding duplication and uncoordinated efforts, and to share such efforts with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the central policymaking body within the United Nations for drug related matters, was reiterated.

80. UNODC's efforts to further enhance the cooperation with other United Nations entities was welcomed, including with the World Health Organization, regarding data sharing to accelerate the rate at which NPS could be reviewed by the WHO's Expert Committee on Drugs (ECDD). Reference was made to the signing of a renewed Memorandum of Understanding between UNODC and WHO in the beginning of 2017, promoting greater collaboration, knowledge sharing and best practices between the two organizations.

81. Several delegations underlined the need to promote the provision of specialized, targeted, effective and sustainable technical assistance, including, where appropriate, adequate financial assistance, training, capacity building, equipment and

technological know-how, to support Member States, including transit countries, upon their request and based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, in effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem. A number of Member States shared good practices of international, regional and bilateral cooperation efforts, with a view to supporting inter alia the reinforcement of the rule of law, the establishment of national observatories on drugs, the adoption of quality and evidence-based criteria, both in demand and supply reduction, and the adoption of sustainable approaches to capacity-building and exchange of good practices and public drug policies, also in the fields of money laundering and the proceeds of crime, security system reform, cryptocurrency or cyber security. Information was shared on successful regional and bilateral cooperation efforts through joint operations, the provision of technical assistance, transfer of knowledge, training and capacity building initiatives.

82. Effective responses were reported to benefit from North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, in particular in preventing and countering illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as drug-related crime and violence. Some delegations informed about good practices regarding the use of networks, including “Networking the Networks”, aimed at enabling fast interregional cooperation to interrupt drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime and related illicit financial flows through the exchange of intelligence, by providing a platform for exchange, coordination and joint operations.

83. Some delegations underlined the need to advance intelligence information sharing through online platforms, such as the UNODC’s Global Synthetics: Monitoring, Analyses, Reporting, and Trends program and relevant INCB tools.

84. In addition, the UNODC WCO Container Control Programme was highlighted as a good practice in international cooperation, supporting Member States with the interception of illicit trafficked goods via maritime containerized cargo and strengthening interdiction capacity on a global level, resulting in increased drug seizures and other illicit goods, such as counterfeit merchandise, arms and other contraband.

85. A number of delegations underlined the importance role of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, taking into consideration the important role of the regional level in ensuring an effective implementation of the operational recommendations contained in the UNGASS outcome, providing an important platform and forum for discussion and cooperation among practitioners. It was highlighted that, without compromising the existing primarily focused format on supply reduction efforts, the Commission should further explore the possibility of opening the subsidiary bodies to other thematic areas addressed in the UNGASS outcome document, welcoming all efforts to foster the exchange among practitioners from different fields.

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