

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

Vienna, 2–6 March 2020

Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of the international drug control treaties: international cooperation to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion**Australia and Croatia:** draft resolution****Promoting awareness-raising, education and training as part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and improving their rational use***The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,*

Recalling the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol,¹ in which the parties recognized that the medical use of narcotic drugs continued to be indispensable for the relief of pain and suffering and that adequate provision must be made to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs for such purposes,

Recalling also the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,² in which it is recognized that the use of psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes is indispensable and that their availability for such purposes should not be unduly restricted,

Recalling further article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,³ in which it is stated that the creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness is a necessary step to be taken to achieve the full realization of the recognized right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

Reaffirming its 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, and more specifically

* E/CN.7/2020/1.

** On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union.

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1019, No. 14956.

³ General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.



the right to health as set out in article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁴

Recalling the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted at its sixty-second session in 2019, in which Member States reiterated their resolve to ensure access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for the relief of pain and suffering, and address existing barriers in this regard, including affordability,

Recalling also the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,⁵ in which Member States committed themselves to improving access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes by appropriately addressing existing barriers in that regard, including those related to legislation, regulatory systems, health-care systems, affordability, the training of health-care professionals, education, awareness-raising, estimates, assessment and reporting, benchmarks for consumption of substances under control, and international cooperation and coordination, while concurrently preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking,

Reiterating that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address the world drug problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and more specifically that increasing access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes is included in target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is focused on access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all,

Recalling its resolution 53/4 of 12 March 2010, on promoting adequate availability of internationally controlled licit drugs for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion and abuse, its resolution 54/6 of 25 March 2011, on promoting adequate availability of internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion and abuse, and its resolution 62/5 of 22 March 2019, on enhancing the capacity of Member States to adequately estimate and assess the need for internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes,

Deeply concerned that the undertreatment of pain is still encountered in more than 150 countries, accounting for some 80 per cent of the world’s population, that less than 10 per cent of children who need pain medications in the world receive it, that global disparity and imbalance remain evident despite all efforts, and that such a situation tends to encourage patients in need of pain treatment to make use of substandard and falsified medicines,

Fully aware of the challenges posed by the misuse or non-medical use of opioids affecting some parts of the world, which underscores the need for a balanced and comprehensive approach in this area,

Emphasizing that more than 40 million people currently require palliative care every year, foreseeing the increased need for palliative care among ageing populations and the rise of non-communicable and other chronic diseases worldwide, considering the importance of palliative care for children, and, in this regard, acknowledging that Member States should have estimates of the quantities of internationally controlled substances needed for medical and scientific purposes, including medicines in paediatric formulations,

Affirming that access to palliative care and to essential medicines for medical and scientific purposes manufactured from controlled substances contributes to the

⁴ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

⁵ General Assembly resolution S-30/1, annex.

realization of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and well-being,

Welcoming the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime publication entitled “Technical guidance: increasing access and availability of controlled medicines”, in which it is underscored that increasing access to and the availability of controlled medicines requires an integration of actions within three core areas, namely, the strengthening and integration of systems, education and awareness, and supply chain management, while taking into account the following five cross-cutting themes: economic structure, consistent messaging, patient-centred care, prevention of diversion and non-medical use, and data and research,

Recalling the supplement to the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2015* entitled *Availability of Internationally Controlled Drugs: Ensuring Adequate Access for Medical and Scientific Purposes – Indispensable, Adequately Available and Not Unduly Restricted* and the supplement to the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2018* entitled *Progress in Ensuring Adequate Access to Internationally Controlled Substances for Medical and Scientific Purposes*, in which it is noted that Member States have increasingly reported the lack of training and awareness among health-care professionals as a major impediment to the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes,

Emphasizing the important role of the scientific community, non-governmental organizations and civil society, including health-care professionals, in improving access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes,

Bearing in mind World Health Assembly resolution WHA67.19 of 2014, on strengthening of palliative care as a component of comprehensive care throughout the life course,

Bearing in mind also World Health Assembly resolution WHA69.25 of 2016, on addressing the global shortage of medicines and vaccines, in which the Assembly recognized that the continuous supply of quality, safe, effective and affordable medicines was one of the building blocks of every well-functioning health system, and noted that global medicine shortages and stockouts undermined the ability of Governments to adequately respond to health emergencies,

Bearing in mind further World Health Assembly resolution WHA70.12 of 2017, on cancer prevention and control in the context of an integrated approach, in which the Assembly emphasized the importance of addressing barriers in access to safe, quality, effective and affordable medicines, medical products and appropriate technology for cancer prevention, detection, screening diagnosis and treatment, including surgery, by strengthening national health systems and international cooperation, including human resources, with the ultimate aim of enhancing access for patients, including through increasing the capacity of the health systems to provide such access,

Acknowledging the expertise and support provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, within their respective mandates, in this area,

Recalling the memorandum of understanding of February 2017 between the World Health Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

Welcoming also the work of the United Nations system coordination task team on the implementation of the United Nations system common position on drug-related matters, in particular the document entitled “What we have learned over the last 10 years: a summary of knowledge acquired and produced by the United Nations system on drug-related matters”, circulated at the sixty-second session of the Commission, in which the task team drew attention to the heavy burden of untreated pain around the world and referred specifically to the limited capacity of health-care

professionals, due to the lack of university curricula on the use of pain medicines that are evidence-based, as a barrier to the accessibility of controlled medicines,

Noting with appreciation the joint global programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and the Union for International Cancer Control on access to controlled drugs for medical purposes while preventing diversion and abuse, and the global project implemented by the International Narcotics Control Board on improving the implementation of the international drug control conventions through strengthening capacity for the control of licit activities related to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals,

Noting with appreciation also the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime opioid strategy, which, inter alia, promotes the rational use of, and access to, opioids for medical and scientific purposes,

1. *Reaffirms* its commitment to effectively implementing the operational recommendations contained in the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,⁵ on ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, and in particular the recommendation to take measures, in accordance with national legislation, to provide capacity-building and training, including with the support of relevant United Nations entities such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, targeted at competent national authorities and health-care professionals, including pharmacists, on adequate access to and use of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including the relief of pain and suffering, consider the development and wider implementation of relevant clinical guidelines on the rational use of controlled medicines, and conduct appropriate awareness-raising campaigns under the coordination of relevant national health authorities and in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders;

2. *Reiterates* that ensuring the availability of controlled substances for legitimate medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion into illicit channels is a general obligation of the international drug control conventions;

3. *Stresses the importance* of a comprehensive, strategic approach to improving access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and their rational use, including for emergency medical care;

4. *Encourages* Member States to make use of the technical support and guidance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization in improving access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and their rational use, including for emergency medical care;

5. *Stresses the importance* of awareness-raising, which includes the provision of objective and adequate information to all relevant persons, including patients, family members and caregivers, and of the education and training of health-care professionals, such as physicians, pharmacists and nurses, on the essential role and rational use of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;

6. *Calls upon* Member States to promote the adequate provision and implementation of evidence-based guidelines and tools, comprehensive education and training programmes, and targeted awareness-raising initiatives, including the provision of objective and adequate information, on the essential role and rational use of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;

7. *Urges* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board, and invites the World Health Organization, to continue strengthening and improving their inter-agency cooperation in this area, and, within their respective mandates, to continue to provide multidisciplinary support to Member

States, in particular with regard to education, training and awareness-raising, including the provision of objective and adequate information, on the essential role and rational use of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;

8. *Encourages* Member States and regional and international organizations to undertake initiatives that strengthen and facilitate cooperation and the exchange of information among competent national authorities, the scientific community, civil society and other relevant stakeholders with a view to improving access to and the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and their rational use;

9. *Invites* Member States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization and other relevant international organizations to facilitate, upon request, the provision of technical and financial assistance to the States most affected by insufficient access to and availability of international controlled substances for pain relief, in particular developing countries;

10. *Invites* Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for these purposes, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the United Nations;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in consultation with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, to report to the Commission at its sixty-sixth session, within the existing reporting obligations, on the implementation of the present resolution.
