



## Press Statement – 2 December 2020

### CND votes on recommendations for cannabis and cannabis-related substances

Vienna, 2 December 2020 – Today, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) took a number of decisions on the international control of cannabis and cannabis-related substances.

Cannabis and cannabis-related substances have for many years been included in the schedules of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol (Schedule I and IV: cannabis and cannabis resin; Schedule I: extracts and tinctures of cannabis), as well as in the Schedules of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 (Schedule I: tetrahydrocannabinol (six isomers of *delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol); Schedule II: dronabinol and its stereoisomers (*delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol)). The inclusion in a specific schedule determines the control measures that States parties are required to apply to the respective substances.

In January 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) made a series of recommendations to change the scope of control of cannabis and cannabis-related substances. After intensive considerations (more information below), the Commission took action today on these recommendations.

**WHO recommendation to delete cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the 1961 Convention, but to maintain it in Schedule I of the 1961 Convention:** The Commission decided by 27 votes to 25 and with one abstention to follow this recommendation. Cannabis and cannabis resin will accordingly be deleted from Schedule IV of the 1961 Convention. They remain in Schedule I of the 1961 Convention and thus remain subject to all levels of control of the 1961 Convention.

**WHO recommendation to move dronabinol and its stereoisomers (*delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol) and tetrahydrocannabinol (six isomers of *delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol), which are psychoactive components of cannabis, from the respective schedules of the 1971 Convention to Schedule I of the 1961 Convention,** which already includes cannabis and cannabis resin: The Commission rejected by 23 votes to 28 with 2 abstentions the recommendation to add dronabinol and its stereoisomers (*delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol) to Schedule I of the 1961 Convention. Due to the conditionalities included in the WHO recommendations, the Commission therefore did not vote on the recommendation relating to the deletion of dronabinol and its stereoisomers (*delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol) from the 1971 Convention. It also did not vote on the recommendation to move tetrahydrocannabinol (six isomers of *delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol) from the 1971 Convention to the 1961 Convention.

**WHO recommendation to delete extracts and tinctures of cannabis from Schedule I of the 1961 Convention:** The Commission decided by 24 votes to 27 and with 2 abstentions not to adopt this recommendation.

**WHO recommendation to add a footnote to Schedule I of the 1961 Convention to read “Preparations containing predominantly cannabidiol and not more than 0.2 per cent of *delta-9*-tetrahydrocannabinol are not under international control”:** The Commission decided by 6 to 43 votes and with 4 abstentions not to add such a footnote.

Lastly, **WHO recommendation to add certain preparations of dronabinol to Schedule III of the 1961 Convention:** As the Commission had predetermined in a procedural decision, adopted at the beginning of the

meeting, this recommendation was deemed rejected, due to the rejection of the recommendation to add dronabinol and its stereoisomers (*delta*-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) to Schedule I of the 1961 Convention.

## Background

Under the international drug control conventions, the CND is mandated to decide on the scope of control of substances by placing them in the schedules of the conventions. Each convention includes a number of schedules, which entail different control regimes. The Commission takes its decisions usually once a year based on recommendations by the WHO, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and States parties to the conventions.

Following a critical review of cannabis by the Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, WHO submitted in January 2019 to the Commission eight recommendations on cannabis and cannabis-related substances. Following its decision 62/14 to postpone the voting to provide States with more time to consider the recommendations, the Commission conducted a dialogue, including two intersessional meetings, with representatives of WHO, INCB and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to address open questions.

Recalling its mandate to vote on scheduling recommendations as laid out in the international drug control conventions, the Commission decided in March 2020 (CND Decision 63/14) to continue considerations of the recommendations, bearing in mind their complexity, in order to clarify the implications and consequences of, as well as the reasoning for, these recommendations. The Commission also decided to vote at its reconvened sixty-third session in December 2020, in order to preserve the integrity of the international scheduling system.

During summer 2020, the Commission held topical meetings on all of the recommendations. These meetings were conducted virtually to allow for the participation of experts from capital. The meetings were attended by over 600 experts from more than 100 Member States. The topical meetings were followed by an intersessional meeting, giving other stakeholders, such as intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, the possibility to share their views.

## More information:

[Explanations of vote of Commission members and statements of Member States](#)

[Summary of the proceedings – E/CN.7/2020/CRP.19](#)

[Compilation of questions and answers of the 2019 consultations](#)

[General information on the international drug control conventions](#)

For further information on the CND preparatory process and the voting process on 2 December, please contact the Secretariat to the Governing Bodies (Email: [unodc-sgb@un.org](mailto:unodc-sgb@un.org)).