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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of all commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the world drug problem**Summary of the open-ended expert group meeting on enhancing and strengthening international and regional cooperation and domestic efforts to address the global synthetic drug problem****I. Introduction**

1. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) hosted the open-ended expert group meeting on enhancing and strengthening international and regional cooperation and domestic efforts to address the global synthetic drug problem. The meeting was hosted at the UNODC headquarters in Vienna on 30 and 31 January 2024.
2. The objective of the meeting was to provide experts from Member States with a platform to engage in a focused technical dialogue, fostering collaboration and the exchange of experiences and best practices in addressing the global synthetic drug problem.
3. The present document presents a summary of the presentations and interventions delivered during the meeting.

II. Organization of the meeting**A. Agenda**

4. The agenda for the meeting was structured around four sessions. Each session focused on a sphere of action under the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy:
 - (a) Multilateralism: facilitating science-informed multilateral processes for the identification of strategic, effective and targeted policy directions and operational activities;

* [E/CN.7/2024/1](#).



(b) Counternarcotics interventions: supporting international operations to disrupt trafficking in synthetic drugs;

(c) Early warning: providing a predictive model for emerging threats and increasing the preparedness of Member States to formulate effective responses to prevent crises before they happen;

(d) Health responses: promoting and facilitating access to scientific evidence-based quality drug prevention, treatment, and care services, and to ensure access and availability of controlled medicines while preventing their diversion.

5. Member States were provided with a provisional agenda, featuring key priority areas to inform the preparation of interventions and guide discussion within each session.

B. Attendance

6. The meeting was attended by 106 representatives from 44 States: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Greece, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, North Macedonia, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

III. Summary of the proceedings

A. Opening

7. Opening remarks were delivered by the Director of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs (DPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); the Chief of the Drugs, Laboratory and Scientific Services Branch (DLSSB), UNODC; and the Coordinator of the Synthetic Drug Strategy, UNODC. The remarks emphasized the growing threat of synthetic drugs across the globe and the commitment of UNODC to facilitating international, regional, and national responses to the challenges posed by synthetic drugs through the framework of the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy, including the activities of its various implementing partners and the resources provided in the United Nations Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs. The Chief of the Research and Trends Analysis Branch (RAB) briefed attendees on the global synthetic drug problem, based on the findings of the *World Drug Report 2023*. In the briefing it was noted that the growing threat of synthetic drugs challenged traditional responses to drug control and thus required innovative and collaborative approaches.

B. Multilateralism

8. The first session, under the title “Multilateralism and international cooperation: facilitating science-informed multilateral processes for the identification of strategic, effective and targeted policy directions and operational activities”, was chaired by the Director of DPA, UNODC.

1. Presentations

9. Presentations were delivered by the Programme Coordinator of the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and Financing of Terrorism (GPML), UNODC, and the Programme Officer for the Global Programme on Cybercrime, UNODC.

10. The Programme Coordinator of GPML highlighted various avenues through which multilateralism could effectively combat the financing of synthetic drug trafficking. Key points included:

(a) Setting standards: referencing the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) report on money-laundering from fentanyl and synthetic opioids, advocating for standards and baselines to detect and disrupt criminal networks;

(b) Network establishment: showcasing the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network as a model, fostering informal exchange among prosecutors to enhance asset confiscation efforts;

(c) Private sector and non-governmental organization (NGO) partnerships: emphasizing the need for dialogues with private sector banking and NGOs to better comprehend vulnerabilities and enhance collaborative efforts.

11. GPML's upcoming plans encompass greater cooperation with the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy to build a greater understanding of the nexus between money-laundering and synthetic drugs, enhance capacity-building through training and network expansion, and explore how asset confiscation can bolster State budgets in addressing this issue.

12. The Programme Officer for Cybercrime emphasized the importance of multilateralism in addressing the borderless dynamics of cyberspace, particularly in the realms of information sharing and coordinating cross-border detection and investigation efforts. In partnership with the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy, the Cybercrime Programme actively conducts bi-national training sessions focused on digital evidence collection relating to synthetic drugs. This initiative aims to establish effective channels for future cooperation and is part of a broader spectrum of capacity-building activities to enhance States' capabilities to detect and combat the trafficking of synthetic drugs within the complex landscape of cyberspace.

2. Interventions

13. Interventions were delivered by representatives from Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, the United Kingdom, the Islamic Republic of Iran, France, Jordan, the United States, Egypt, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, Singapore, Australia, Cuba, Italy and Türkiye.

14. Canada emphasized the importance of international cooperation in disrupting the trafficking of synthetic drugs. Canada highlighted its regional collaboration with the United States and Mexico, its engagement in joint efforts on both policy and operational fronts, and its active participation in initiatives such as the bilateral United States-Canada Action Plan and the trilateral North American Dialogue on Drug Policy. Canada noted that through its partnership with UNODC, it has funded national authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean to create and strengthen Early Warning Systems. Canada expressed support for centralized initiatives, such as the UN Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs and the United States-led Global Coalition, aimed at advancing global understandings of the synthetic drug problem.

15. **Brazil** acknowledged the interconnected nature of the synthetic drug threat and shared guidance on addressing the synthetic drug problem from its national experts, including:

(a) Facilitating the transfer of forensic technology for drug identification;

(b) Donating analytical standards, including reference materials, to promote consistency in drug analysis across borders;

(c) Sharing analytical methodologies and best practices related to prevention and treatment;

(d) Exchanging information on harm reduction methodologies;

(e) Working towards the establishment of international protocols for health responses.

16. **Mexico** acknowledged the importance of international cooperation in implementing crosscutting strategies to detect and prevent the trafficking of synthetic drugs and their precursors. Mexico highlighted its engagement in international cooperation through initiatives such as the trilateral dialogue with the United States and Canada, participation in the United States-led Global Coalition, and close coordination with China and India to detect supply chains. Additionally, Mexico reaffirmed its commitment to multilateral institutions and mechanisms, including UNODC.

17. **Ecuador** urged the international community to collaborate on comprehensive solutions addressing the issues of usage, manufacturing, and trafficking. Ecuador reiterated its dedication to international drug conventions and strategies, including the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy.

18. **The United Kingdom** noted that it has prioritized the issue of synthetic drugs and formed a cross-government task force to deliberate evidence-based policies, programmatic initiatives, and legislative decisions in this regard. Acknowledging synthetic drugs as a global concern necessitating international cooperation, the United Kingdom expressed its dedication to collaborating with scientific experts, NGOs, and regional and international organizations to exchange information, identify challenges, and address emerging threats. The United Kingdom also emphasized learning from global partners, such as through the United States-led Global Coalition, and staying informed about the work of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and UNODC.

19. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** affirmed its commitment to fulfilling international drug commitments, encompassing treaties, conventions, and various international instruments. The Islamic Republic of Iran noted that it has prioritized the implementation of balanced drug strategies, actively engaging in capacity-building, research, and legislative initiatives. The Islamic Republic of Iran encouraged countries to continue in collaborative efforts, particularly in the sharing of data and information concerning synthetic drugs through platforms facilitated by INCB and UNODC.

20. **France** emphasized the importance of international cooperation on the identification and sharing of information from forensic laboratories around the globe to identify new and emerging synthetic drugs and precursor threats. France noted that it has prioritized the interception of precursors involved in illicit manufacture. France called for greater international cooperation in addressing the trafficking of synthetic drugs through cyberspace.

21. **Jordan** emphasized that enhancing global cooperation is crucial to addressing the synthetic drug problem. Jordan noted that its commitment to global cooperation is evident through its active participation in the United States-led Global Coalition and its expressed support for the initiatives of UNODC.

22. **The United States** characterized synthetic drugs as a contemporary threat to global public health and security that necessitates a collaborative response. In recognition of this, the United States initiated the Global Coalition, aiming for a comprehensive, worldwide approach to tackle the synthetic drug problem. The coalition currently boasts participation from 144 countries and 11 international organizations, with UNODC holding a significant role. The United States encouraged nations to engage with the private sector to devise effective strategies against synthetic drug threats. Additionally, the United States noted it will host a high-level event during CND67 to share best practices.

23. **Egypt** conveyed its support to UNODC for uniting the international community to address the synthetic drug problem. Egypt emphasized the endeavours of its national authorities to consult international guidance as part of their commitment to harmonize and amend domestic laws related to illicit substances.

24. **The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** stressed the collaborative nature required to address the synthetic drug problem, acknowledging that tackling it in isolation is impractical. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela underscored its human-centred approach to drug policy and pointed out successful collaborations with France, the United States, Mexico, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which resulted in seizures of synthetic drugs.

25. **Colombia** expressed its readiness to participate in bilateral, regional, and multilateral efforts aimed at addressing synthetic drugs. Colombia urged the international community to shift away from the “war on drugs” paradigm and advocated for a collaborative approach grounded in human rights and science-based methodologies.

26. **Singapore** voiced concerns regarding the deteriorating global situation concerning synthetic drugs. Singapore emphasized its proactive stance, involving regular reviews of anti-drug legislation to align with international laws and evolving trends in synthetic drugs. Singapore also noted its active engagement in regional and international capacity-building exercises to enhance global responses. Singapore reaffirmed its commitment to collaborating with international partners to collectively address the global synthetic drug problem.

27. **Australia** expressed concern over the impact of synthetic drugs on its communities and emphasized the significant value of strengthening regional and international cooperation to disrupt synthetic drug-related supply chains. Australia highlighted that international collaboration could facilitate enhanced information gathering, sharing, and capacity building in data collection. Australia noted its active engagement in bilateral initiatives in Southeast Asia and its active participation in the United States-led Global Coalition.

28. **Cuba** expressed its support for the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy international cooperation through both bilateral and multilateral engagements in addressing synthetic drugs. Cuba called for increased opportunities to discuss and share innovative approaches. Additionally, Cuba encouraged collaboration on capacity-building activities to enhance responses to synthetic drugs.

29. **Italy** expressed support for the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy and urged for increased international cooperation to tackle synthetic drugs, emphasizing information sharing and the exchange of best practices. Italy underscored its active participation in the United States-led Global Coalition.

30. **Türkiye** outlined its multifaceted responses to the global synthetic drug problem, stressing the significance of international cooperation in addressing this issue. Türkiye highlighted that its collaborations with 23 countries from 2015 to 2023 led to 60 recorded instances of drug seizures.

C. Counternarcotics interventions

31. The second session, under the title “Strengthening counternarcotic capacity: supporting international operations to disrupt trafficking in synthetic drugs,” was chaired by the Head of Coordination, Border Management Branch, UNODC.

1. Presentations

32. Presentations were delivered by the Senior Programme Coordinator, Passenger and Cargo Border Team (PCBT), UNODC and the Scientific Affairs Officer, Laboratory and Scientific Services (LSS), UNODC.

33. **The Senior Programme Coordinator of PCBT** provided an overview of the UNODC’s Container Control Programme (CCP) and Airport Communications Programme (AIRCOP), which recently combined to form PCBT. As an implementing partner of the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy, PCBT supports Member States in building capacity on synthetic drug detection among border security, enhancing drug detection capabilities among border security agencies and facilitating information

sharing at regional and international levels. In 2022, PCBT assisted 179 units in achieving over 1,500 seizures, including substantial quantities of methamphetamines, new psychoactive substances (NPS), and precursor chemicals.

34. **The Scientific Affairs Officer for LSS** presented the activities conducted under the Synthetic Drug Strategy. LSS supports law enforcement and forensic laboratories globally to improve their capacity for detecting and identifying synthetic drugs. These activities include training on the utilization of rapid tests and advanced handheld devices with samples of controlled substances. Additionally, LSS provides guidelines on the safe handling and disposal of synthetic drugs. In the upcoming year, LSS plans to deliver training on crime scene investigation and security document examination to enhance law enforcement capabilities in disrupting synthetic drug trafficking.

2. Interventions

35. Interventions were delivered by representatives from Egypt, Canada, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mexico, Thailand, France, Australia, Cuba, and the United Kingdom.

36. **Egypt** shared insights from synthetic drug seizures conducted by its security forces, offering information on the concealment methods employed by traffickers and the techniques employed by security forces to identify concealed drugs. Additionally, the Egyptian Drug Authority established a Cybercrime Department, which focuses on detecting illicit, counterfeit, and unregistered substances on various social media platforms and has resulted in several seizures of synthetic drugs.

37. **Canada** acknowledged the necessity of a balanced approach to countering the global synthetic drug problem, underscoring the significance of precursor controls and human rights considerations. Canada highlighted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP) strategies to address organized crime groups involved in illicit trafficking, including clandestine laboratory enforcement and response teams to aid local law enforcement, and collaboration with the private sector to identify and prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals.

38. **The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** highlighted the implementation of intelligence systems, such as early warning alerts, to combat synthetic drugs. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela acknowledged economic constraints that pose challenges to accessing state-of-the-art technology for the identification and detection of synthetic drugs.

39. **Mexico** voiced concerns about the trafficking of synthetic drugs and their precursors through international ports. Mexico called for the establishment of a strategic network to facilitate a heightened rate of inspection for global containers at international ports. Additionally, Mexico endorsed the improvement of reliable data to support evidence-based responses and emphasized the need to enhance the capacity of forensic laboratories in identifying new and emerging substances.

40. **Thailand** outlined its strategies aimed at targeting and apprehending key figures involved in regional synthetic drug trafficking. The presentation underscored the significance of information-sharing with other countries and the provision of practical capacity-building training to neighbouring countries.

41. **France** acknowledged its use of UNODC's guidelines on safe handling to safeguard its frontline officers. France highlighted the challenges faced in dismantling synthetic drug laboratories and emphasized the need for a comprehensive guide in this context. Additionally, France underscored the need to bolster security measures for containers at ports. Expressing concerns about the use of social media for illicit substance transactions, France proposed the establishment of public-private partnerships with technology companies to address this issue.

42. **Australia** emphasized the significance of the Fintel Alliance, a public-private partnership that collaborates between Australia's law enforcement, security agencies, and financial industry partners to identify money laundering syndicates and financial

crime risks. The efforts of this alliance have contributed to the identification of numerous instances of drug trafficking. Additionally, Australia highlighted the contributions of the NGO, Crime Stoppers, which provides a platform for the public to anonymously share information regarding the manufacture and supply of illicit substances. In addressing diversion, Australia noted the enacting of legislation to enhance preventive measures against criminal groups importing dual-use substances.

43. **Cuba** noted that it has given priority to the early identification of synthetic drugs. Cuba acknowledged the adoption of new modalities by drug traffickers, such as the postal service. Cuba expressed its steadfast commitment to international agreements for ongoing cooperation at the global level. Cuba added that its authorities are actively seeking bilateral engagements to address this issue.

44. **The United Kingdom** highlighted its zero-tolerance approach to curtail the supply of synthetic drugs within the country. The United Kingdom noted collaboration with forensic laboratories as playing a role in identifying substances of concern, accompanied by the routine sharing of intelligence concerning emerging issues. Moreover, the United Kingdom engages in collaborative efforts with other governments to address international drug trafficking. The regulatory framework in the United Kingdom also mandates technology platforms to proactively address and counter drug trafficking activities on their respective platforms.

D. Early warning

45. The third session, under the title “Early warning on emerging synthetic drug threats: providing a predictive model for emerging threats and increasing the preparedness of Member States to formulate effective responses to prevent crises before they happen,” was chaired by the Chief of RAB, UNODC.

1. Presentations

46. Presentations were delivered by the International Coordinator on Technical Cooperation, LSS, UNODC; the Drug Policy Officer, LSS, UNODC; and the UNODC Regional Representative for Central Asia.

47. **The International Coordinator on Technical Cooperation for LSS** presented on the UNODC Early Warning Advisory (EWA), which is maintained by LSS and serves as a knowledge hub and monitoring tool on emerging drug threats for various stakeholders. To ensure the scientific accuracy of the UNODC EWA, LSS collaborates with national forensic laboratories around the world to collect and analyse the data. As of January 2023, the UNODC EWA has accumulated over 37,000 data entries from 141 countries and territories, assisting over 1,300 users with approximately 17,000 user sessions per month. Based on the information gathered by the UNODC EWA, LSS generates recommendations for review by the World Health Organization (WHO) to determine possible international controls. LSS also facilitates information exchanges to enhance national and regional Early Warning Systems.

48. **The Drug Policy Officer for LSS** presented on how Early Warning Systems inform and guide evidence-based international drug policy and enable the international community to formulate timely and effective responses. Several factors can ensure that Early Warning Systems translate into effective policy:

- (a) Enhancing forensic capacity and strategic partnerships to enable policymakers to formulate effective interventions and solutions;
- (b) Integrating responses into wider national drug policy systems, including multidisciplinary networks covering forensics, health, and law enforcement;
- (c) Facilitating national, regional, and international cooperation, and information sharing at all levels to increase knowledge of synthetic drugs.

49. Looking forward, UNODC remains steadfast in its commitment to improving Early Warning Systems worldwide and encourages countries to collaborate with the UNODC EWA.

50. **The UNODC Regional Representative for Central Asia** presented on the emerging threat of synthetic drugs across the region. Emphasizing the significant increases in trafficking and consumption, alongside the proliferation of clandestine laboratories, policymakers in the region face a daunting challenge. The adoption of new action plans by countries like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan reflects the importance of a proactive stance towards addressing the global synthetic drug problem.

2. Interventions

51. Interventions were delivered by representatives from Italy, Belgium, Thailand, Colombia, the United Kingdom, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, North Macedonia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, France, Australia, Peru and the Russian Federation.

52. **Italy** highlighted the establishment of its Early Warning System and emphasized the importance of multisectoral information sharing. Italy also noted its active participation in the United States-led Global Coalition as the co-chair of the working group on Early Warning. Furthermore, Italy highlighted the establishment of the Italian Society of Forensic Toxicology, a network of national forensic laboratories.

53. **Belgium** presented its approach to a national Early Warning System, highlighting its engagement with diverse stakeholders, the establishment of accessible points of contact, and emphasis on a tailored approach. Belgium acknowledged the significance of international Early Warning Systems, like the UNODC EWA, in raising awareness about global drug threats and enhancing preparedness for potential crises.

54. **Thailand** acknowledged the importance of innovation and technology in sharing information. Thailand also noted its initiation of bilateral and multilateral collaborations aimed at drug monitoring and information sharing on drugs and their precursor chemicals, as well as its commitment to providing neighbouring countries with capacity-building training on strategic interventions and policy decisions.

55. **Colombia** highlighted its national counternarcotics strategy, Esmeralda PLUS, which integrates inter-institutional capacities to develop comprehensive responses to drug production and trafficking. Colombia also emphasized the importance of collaborating with diverse stakeholders, such as the private sector and academic institutions, to support multi-sectoral approaches to the global synthetic drug problem.

56. **The United Kingdom** pledged support to UNODC's initiatives to address the global synthetic drug problem, including the UNODC EWA and the Synthetics Monitoring, Analysis, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme. To bolster its national response to synthetic drugs, the United Kingdom's Synthetic Opioids Task Force is in the process of developing an Early Warning System for sharing data globally. Moreover, the United Kingdom noted its national wastewater analysis programme to monitor synthetic drug use.

57. **Egypt** expressed its concerns about drug use among youth, the impact of NPS, and the trafficking of non-scheduled precursors. Egypt underscored the importance of launching broader outreach campaigns to raise awareness about new substances and the use of innovative approaches to collect data on synthetic drug use.

58. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** called on UNODC to lead the United Nations system's collection and dissemination of the latest evidence and scientific knowledge on synthetic drugs among Member States. Additionally, the Islamic Republic of Iran urged for greater intelligence sharing and operational collaboration between nations. The Islamic Republic of Iran encouraged Member States to participate in the UNODC EWA and INCB information-sharing system.

59. **North Macedonia** discussed its efforts to implement a new action plan for its national drug strategy, which focuses on NPS. Additionally, Additionally, North

Macedonia underscored the importance of strengthening its forensic capacity and highlighted its collaboration within the Balkan region to gather data that will bolster its drug-related initiatives.

60. **Canada** emphasized the significance of early warning systems in mitigating risks. Canada cited its Drug Analysis Service as a pivotal tool for facilitating communication channels on new and emerging substances among stakeholders. Additionally, Canada highlighted its engagement in intelligence networks with international partners and its utilization of various data collection methods, including wastewater analysis, automated monitoring, and online surveys, to detect new substances and usage patterns. Stressing the importance of a strong global forensic network such as the UNODC EWA, Canada urged heightened awareness and enhanced information sharing with international partners.

61. **Mexico** expressed its commitment to working with CCP in implementing the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy, serving as a vital tool in fostering communication and information exchange about emerging substances across borders while also enhancing capacity-building efforts.

62. **The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** underscored the important role of its national drug observatory in raising awareness and facilitating information exchange concerning the impact of synthetic drugs.

63. **France** emphasized the importance of cross-sector collaboration to facilitate the scientific analysis of emerging drug threats. France noted the use of its national surveillance board, which shares information with the European Union and the European Union Drugs Agency, enabling collaboration with other nations and soliciting feedback. France also highlighted the need for integrating precursor chemicals into Early Warning Systems.

64. **Australia** noted its various initiatives aimed at monitoring emerging substances, including the Emerging Drugs Network of Australia, which collaborates with emergency departments, clinical toxicologists, and forensic laboratories to detect and collect data on emerging drug threats. Australia also expressed its support for the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy, the UNODC EWA, and the United States-led Global Coalition.

65. **Peru** noted its ongoing cooperation with CCP in implementing the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy. Peru emphasized the importance of monitoring precursor chemicals used in the illegal production of synthetic drugs. Underlining the importance of information exchange, Peru commended the UNODC for facilitating international mechanisms such as the UNODC EWA.

66. **The Russian Federation** acknowledged UNODC's efforts in facilitating information sharing and best practices between Member States and praised the UNODC EWA as an example of utilizing scientific data to support practical measures and inter-sectoral collaboration. The Russian Federation shared its ongoing efforts to enhance its capacity to share toxicological and forensic laboratory data among different agencies. The Russian Federation emphasized the role of its national forensic laboratories in providing scientific data to competent authorities, as well as international partners, such as UNODC. The Russian Federation expressed its support for UNODC's activities, particularly the United Nations Laboratory and the UNODC International Collaborative Exercises (ICE) programme.

E. Health responses

67. The fourth session, under the title "Promote science informed health responses: Promoting and facilitating access to scientific evidence-based quality drug prevention, treatment and care services and to ensure access and availability of controlled medicines while preventing their diversion," was chaired by the Chief of DLSSB, UNODC.

1. Presentations

68. Presentations were delivered by the Chief of the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section (PTRS), UNODC; the Chief of the HIV and AIDS Section (HAS); and the UNODC Regional Representative for the Andean Region and the Southern Cone.

69. **The Chief of PTRS highlighted UNODC’s evidence-based activities and responses to prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, and access to controlled medicines while preventing their diversion.** These include:

(a) Evidence-based prevention programmes focusing on family skills and life skills (Strong Family Programme, Family United, Lions Quest);

(b) Integrated services aligned with science to amplify the resilience of children from birth to prevent the use of drugs and other psychoactive substances (CHAMPS);

(c) Treatment and care services to protect and promote the health of people who use drugs or have drug use disorders;

(d) Interagency collaboration on access to controlled medicines while preventing their diversion.

70. **The Chief of HAS** presented an overview of UNODC’s initiatives addressing HIV and other blood-borne diseases among people who use drugs and people in prison. Collaborating closely with UNAIDS and other United Nations agencies, UNODC offers technical assistance to 24 high-priority countries for individuals using drugs and 30 countries focusing on prison settings. The presentation emphasized several key focus areas, including needle and syringe programmes, opioid substitution therapy, HIV testing and counselling, as well as HIV treatment, care, and support.

71. **The UNODC Regional Representative for the Andean Region and the Southern Cone** spoke about the various challenges synthetic drugs pose to the region, including health-related issues. To address this, UNODC collaborates with regional countries to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices. In Argentina, a comprehensive programme focusing on synthetic drugs and precursors has been initiated by UNODC. The programme aims to enhance capabilities in forensic analysis, intelligence gathering, and specialized investigative techniques. Moreover, it integrates components related to cybercrime and anti-corruption measures. The success of this programme serves as a model for other countries within the region.

2. Interventions

72. Interventions were delivered by the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Egypt, Thailand, Mexico, Italy, Jordan, Singapore and the Russian Federation.

73. **The United Kingdom** expressed its dedication to provide health services for individuals impacted by drug addiction. The United Kingdom highlighted the 10-year drug strategy, “From Harm to Hope”, aimed at improving drug treatment and recovery services. Initiatives include expanding treatment capacity, improving workforce skills, and building partnerships at the local level for successful implementation.

74. **Canada** highlighted its alignment with a human rights-based drug policy and support for the latest Human Rights Council resolution on drug policies. Canada noted that the Canadian Drugs and Substance Strategy focuses on addressing substance-related harms through prevention, education, evidence-based approaches, support services, and substance controls. Canada emphasized the importance of addressing vulnerable populations, incorporating gender sensitivity, and prioritizing stigma reduction. Canada expressed support for UNODC convening an expert group meeting to discuss best practices to reduce stigma.

75. **Australia** expressed its commitment to harm minimization through its national drug strategy, focusing on improving access to evidence-based treatment and addressing specific priority population groups. Key initiatives include reducing

stigma, increasing community awareness, and implementing harm reduction measures. Australia welcomed the new UNODC initiative. Regarding prioritizing access and availability of controlled medicines, Australia pledged its support for the collaborative UNODC-WHO-INCB global programme.

76. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** emphasized its development and implementation of a national document on primary prevention. That document incorporates harm reduction initiatives to improve public health. The Islamic Republic of Iran has also focused on enhancing access to controlled medications while preventing their misuse through regulatory measures and health monitoring systems. The Islamic Republic of Iran has reported a consistent downward trend in drug use-related HIV, AIDS and hepatitis cases.

77. **Egypt** highlighted its launch of national prevention campaigns engaging multiple stakeholders, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable populations. Innovative strategies, such as utilizing social media platforms and establishing toll-free hotlines for emergency assistance, have also been implemented to disseminate information about the dangers of drug use and provide access to medical and psychological support. Egypt expressed support and interest in collaborating with the UNODC CHAMPS initiative.

78. **Thailand** emphasized the importance of engaging youth in drug prevention efforts through social media and the utilization of social media influencers to disseminate information. At a regional level, Thailand noted the establishment of the international youth network focused on drug prevention to exchange best practices.

79. **Mexico** highlighted the shift in its drug strategy paradigm, focusing on addressing root causes through a science-based, health-centric approach. This aims to improve access to preventive treatments, care services, and assistance across all societal sectors. Moreover, awareness campaigns and training initiatives are integral components of this comprehensive strategy. Mexico also expressed support for strengthening guidance on Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.

80. **Italy** shared its experiences in implementing protocols for women and newborn babies that specifically focus on investigating potential drug use or abuse. Italy noted that this protocol enables early intervention and support for the entire family.

81. **Jordan** outlined the efforts of its specialized counternarcotics authority, particularly its work on prevention through the delivery of seminars at schools, universities, and social media. Additionally, Jordan noted the availability of free specialized centres for the treatment of people with drug use disorders. Jordan expressed concerns about the diversion of precursor chemicals intended for licit pharmaceutical purposes.

82. **Singapore** highlighted prevention as a fundamental principle of the nation's drug strategy, specifically focusing on preventive drug use education. This aims to inform youth about the harms of drug use and foster a public consensus supporting a zero-tolerance approach to drug use.

83. **The Russian Federation** advocated for a comprehensive and balanced strategy to reduce drug demand, ranging from prevention to rehabilitation and the social reintegration of drug users. The Russian Federation expressed support for UNODC initiatives on youth and proposed the formation of independent regional youth networks.

IV. Closing of the meeting

84. Participants, presenters, and chairs were thanked for their valuable contributions.

85. Participants were notified that a summary of the meeting would be submitted as a conference room paper at the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

86. Participants were informed that recordings and presentations of the meeting would be made accessible on the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy website (<https://syntheticdrugs.unodc.org/>) and that live recordings of all four sessions were available on United Nations Web TV (<https://webtv.un.org/>) in the six official languages of the United Nations.

87. Participants were informed that preparations were in progress for a follow-up expert group meeting, which would provide an opportunity to further elaborate on discussions and explore strategies for addressing synthetic drugs. Detailed information was to be shared at a later date.
