
Economic and Social Council

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Resolution 3 (XL)

Availability of opiates for medical needs

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Reaffirming that it is a responsibility of States parties to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 [1] to ensure the adequate availability of opiates to satisfy legitimate medical needs, while limiting the production and use of opiates to such purposes in order to prevent illicit production of, trafficking in and use of narcotic drugs,

Recognizing that a number of Governments as well as national and international health organizations, including the World Health Organization, have called for greater availability of opiates to relieve the pain and suffering of medical patients afflicted with cancer and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1989/15 of 22 May 1989, 1990/31 of 24 May 1990 and 1991/43 of 21 June 1991, in which the Council requested the International Narcotics Control Board to assess legitimate medical and scientific needs for opiates that may not have been met hitherto,

Recognizing that the Board, in cooperation with the World Health Organization, conducted a survey of Governments and concluded that medical needs for opiates were far from being met, and that the recommendations made in its special report of 1989 entitled Demand for and Supply of Opiates for Medical and Scientific Needs [2] were far from being implemented,

Noting with appreciation that the Board, in order to correct the problems relating to the availability of opiates for medical needs, has prepared specific recommendations directed to Governments, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the World Health Organization and others,

Having considered the recommendations of the Board contained in its special report of 1995 entitled Availability of Opiates for Medical Needs, [3]

1. Urges all Governments to consider, as a matter of priority, adopting the recommendations contained in the 1995 special report of the International Narcotics Control Board entitled Availability of Opiates for Medical Needs;
2. Requests the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to implement the recommendations contained in paragraph 52 of the 1995 special report of the Board, in particular when assisting Governments in the drafting of national drug-control legislation, and by including relevant provisions in national drug-control master plans;
3. Commends the International Narcotics Control Board for its efforts in promoting adherence to the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, which require the adequate availability of opiates for legitimate medical needs, and encourages the Board to pursue implementation of the measures specified in paragraph 50 of its 1995 special report;
4. Invites the World Health Organization to implement the recommendations contained in paragraph 54 of the 1995 special report of the Board, within the system of control established under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961;

5. Requests the Board to reassess the situation by the year 2000;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the present resolution to all Governments and relevant international organizations for consideration and implementation.

[1] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 520, No. 7515.

[2] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XI.5.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.XI.6.
