

Resolution 55/1

Promoting international cooperation in responding to the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Concerned that new psychoactive substances are increasingly being marketed as legal alternatives to internationally controlled drugs and that these substances may pose risks to public health and safety,

Acknowledging the dynamic and fast-paced nature of this market and the increasing role that the Internet plays in the trade of new psychoactive substances,

Deeply concerned about reports of the increased and emerging use of and trade in new psychoactive substances that may have effects similar to those of internationally controlled drugs,¹

Concerned about the potential opportunities for transnational organized criminal groups to exploit the market for these substances,

Noting that a number of new psychoactive substances that have already been identified as posing serious risks to public health are subject to domestic control within certain Member States,

Noting also that the identification and control of emerging new psychoactive substances can pose challenges to effective health and law enforcement regulation,

Recalling its resolution 48/1 of 11 March 2005, on promoting the sharing of information on emerging trends in the abuse of and trafficking in substances not controlled under the international drug control conventions,

Recalling also its resolution 53/11 of 12 March 2010, on promoting the sharing of information on the potential abuse of and trafficking in synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists,

Recalling further the functions mandated to the World Health Organization, under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1954 as amended by the 1972 Protocol² and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,³ to provide medical and scientific recommendations to the Commission with regard to assessing the potential liability for abuse and ill effects of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances,

Welcoming the 2011 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime entitled “Synthetic cannabinoids in herbal products”, which provides a comprehensive review and valuable recommendations in response to synthetic cannabinoids,

Acknowledging the success of the global Synthetics Monitoring: Analysis, Reporting and Trends programme of the United Nations

¹ See the *World Drug Report 2011* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.11.XI.10).

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1019, No. 14956.

Office on Drugs and Crime in improving understanding of the synthetic drug problem through monitoring the illicit manufacture and use of and trafficking in synthetic drugs, including emerging synthetic substances, and noting the progress in implementation of that approach,

Acknowledging also the work of States members of the European Union, together with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, in developing effective processes for addressing new psychoactive substances, including an early warning system and risk assessment methodologies,

1. *Encourages* Member States to monitor emerging trends in the composition, production and distribution of new psychoactive substances, as well as patterns of use of those substances within their own national borders;

2. *Urges* Member States to share that information, through appropriate bilateral and multilateral channels, in particular with regard to patterns of use, risks to public health, forensic data and regulation of new psychoactive substances, with other Member States and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;

3. *Encourages* Member States, based on the available information on patterns of use and risks to the public, including risks to young people, to adopt appropriate measures aimed at reducing supply and demand in accordance with their national legislation;

4. *Also encourages* Member States to take measures to tackle the problem of new psychoactive substances, in accordance with their national legislation, by improving research, analysis and forensic and toxicological capability and advancing the monitoring of such substances, including sales through the Internet, through, but not limited to, the provision of bilateral technical assistance to Member States, and to share that information, where appropriate, with Member States;

5. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant international organizations, upon request, to provide Member States with technical assistance, including by supporting forensic and toxicological capability, to respond to the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances;

6. *Encourages* Member States to consider a wide variety of responses, such as temporary and emergency drug control measures in response to an imminent threat to public health, the use of consumer protection, medicines legislation and hazardous substances legislation, and, where appropriate, to consider criminal justice measures aimed at preventing the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in new psychoactive substances;

7. *Urges* Member States, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, to further cooperate, in accordance with national law, in judicial and law enforcement activities to tackle the trade in and distribution and manufacture of those new psychoactive substances that have already been identified as posing risks to public health and that are subject to control within certain Member States;

8. *Calls on* Member States to cooperate, where appropriate, in addressing the possible public health risks of new psychoactive substances, and to share information and expertise on effective responses with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization;

9. *Encourages* the World Health Organization, pursuant to article 3 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961⁴ and article 2 of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,⁵ to fulfil its mandate to review substances for possible scheduling recommendations to the Commission, so that the Commission can fulfil its mandate under those same articles;

10. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to enhance the collection of information on new psychoactive substances, including through existing mechanisms such as the global Synthetics Monitoring: Analysis, Reporting and Trends programme, within its current financial and technical capacity, and considering the need for new mechanisms;

11. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to exchange information on new psychoactive substances, where appropriate, with relevant international organizations and global and regional cooperation frameworks, including the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the World Customs Organization;

12. *Encourages* Member States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and other relevant organizations, including the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, to increasingly share information on new psychoactive substances;

13. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to provide an update to its 2011 report entitled “Synthetic cannabinoids in herbal products”, addressing a wider range of new psychoactive substances, in addition to synthetic cannabinoids, and to take into consideration the creation of a compilation of new psychoactive substances encountered by Member States, to serve as an early warning advisory;

14. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to report to the Commission, at its fifty-sixth session, on progress made with respect to the activities described in the present resolution;

15. *Invites* Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for these purposes in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations.

*9th Plenary Meeting
16 March 2012*

⁴ Ibid., vol. 520, No. 7515.

⁵ Ibid., vol. 1019, No. 14956.