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**Commission on Narcotic Drugs  
Fifty-second session**

Vienna, 11-20 March 2009

Agenda item 8

**Policy directives to the drug programme of the  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**

**Commission on Crime Prevention and  
Criminal Justice**

**Eighteenth session**

Vienna, 16-24 April 2009

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*\*

**Policy directives for the crime programme of the  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and  
the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention  
and Criminal Justice as its governing body,  
including administrative, strategic management  
and budgetary questions and follow-up to  
resolutions**

**UNODC Regional Programmes: a strategic planning and  
implementation tool**

*Summary*

The paper outlines the overall approach now being taken by UNODC in the development and implementation of Regional Programmes, including outlining the process of consultation being undertaken and the structure of emerging Regional Programmes. The link between Regional and Thematic Programmes is also described.

Regional Programmes will provide a key tool in ensuring ownership by partner countries, strengthening field based programming, and integrating UNODC more effectively within the UN system as a whole.

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\* Reissued for technical reasons.

\*\* E/CN.15/2009/1.



## **I. Development of a regional approach to programming**

UNODC's Medium-Term Strategy, adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and reflected in ECOSOC Resolution 2007/19, provides the overall result-based framework guiding the programmatic activities of the Office for the period 2008-2011. At the same time, the UN development system is undertaking a major reform which would considerably change the way of managing and providing technical assistance in the field, with a primary objective of ensuring that all parts of the UN system would provide their specific expertise into a more integrated development framework.

Beginning in 2008, UNODC launched a major exercise to streamline its strategic planning and implementation tools, moving away from a fragmented project-based approach to a truly integrated "Programme Approach". Two instruments have been developed to operationalize the Strategy both by topic and geographically – these are the Thematic Programmes and Regional Programmes.

A core objective of this new approach, particularly in relation to field-level programming, is to ensure better consultation with Member States, more effective integration within UNODC's internal planning and implementation, and more effective engagement with the UN system as a whole.

The elaboration of Regional and Thematic Programmes enables UNODC to engage more effectively with the UN system, both at Headquarters and the field level, thus utilizing its comparative advantages in a more coherent, integrated and cost-effective way. Furthermore, regional programmes function as a key vehicle for implementation, ensuring that UNODC's work practices reflect a more coherent and integrated approach both at regional and at national level.

## **II. Regional Programmes and Thematic Programmes**

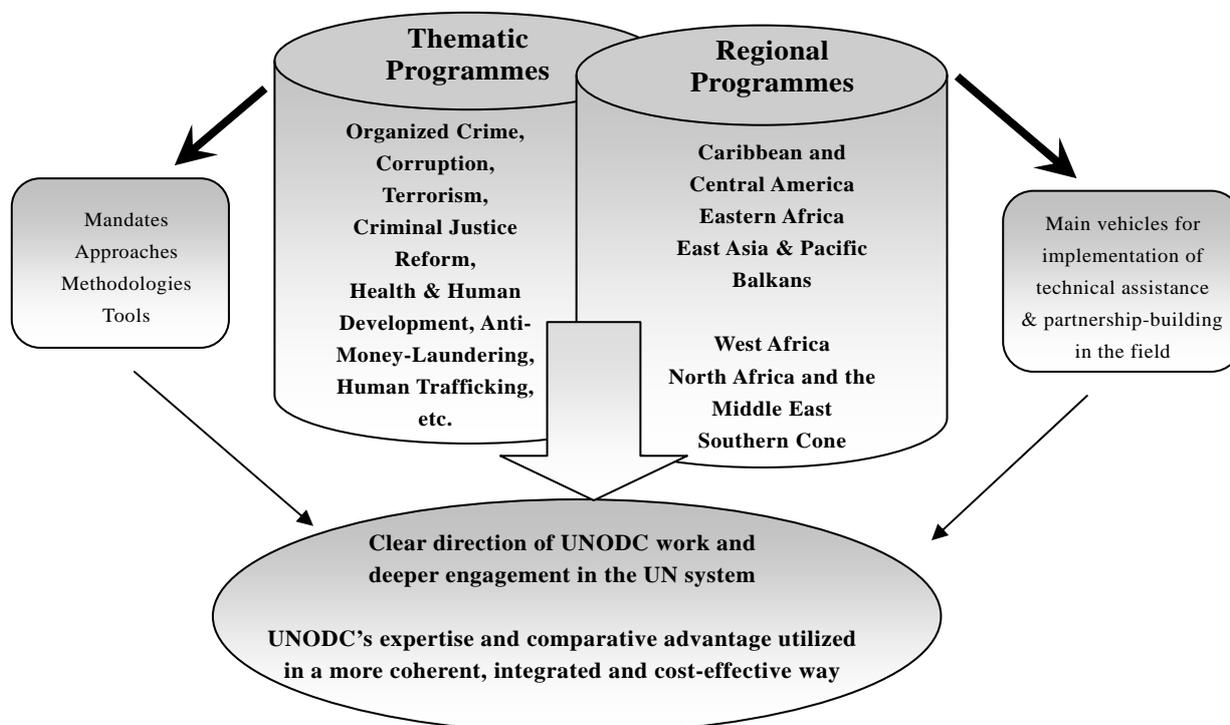
Since the concept of Thematic Programmes preceded the work as it is currently being conducted on Regional Programmes, a brief explanation of the links between the two are important.

Thematic Programmes provide a conceptual synthesis of UNODC work (i.e. mandates, approaches, methodologies, assistance tools) covering each of its thematic priorities, such as organized crime, corruption, criminal justice reform, health and human development or terrorism prevention. Their objective is to provide Member States with a clear overview of UNODC's work on key thematic priorities integrating the various components of the Office's expertise in the areas of advocacy, research, legislative and legal support, norm setting and technical assistance. Thematic Programmes, in providing an overview of UNODC's mandates and strategy in a particular thematic area, are being developed by Headquarters.

Regional Programmes are primarily adopting a "bottom up" approach, ensuring full consultation with Member States at field level as to their priorities and, by so doing, set out a series of clear objectives for UNODC's delivery of technical assistance and partnership-building.

There will be full complementarity between the Thematic and Regional Programmes, as the two strategic tools will mutually reinforce each other. Thematic

Programmes would, for example, provide an overview of the key services being provided to the field in a relevant thematic area. In turn, Regional Programmes will be structured around key thematic priorities reflecting the respective regional and national setting. It should be emphasized that Regional Programmes will have a strong operational approach, seeking to provide a clear framework within which technical assistance can be conducted at field level.



### III. The principles of the Regional Programme approach

Regional programmes have been developed to provide consistency in the objectives, policy approaches and management arrangements across UNODC, both at Headquarters and in the field, and to provide the basis for the launching and growth of a new generation of UNODC technical cooperation programmes. Pursuing such an approach is critical in changing the way UNODC works. The Regional Programme's approach facilitates:

- The move from small projects towards better integrated, multi-component programmes, closely linked to other UN programmes and fully aligned with Governments' priorities;
- More effective cooperation and planning, involving other UN entities, including by more effectively mainstreaming UNODC mandate areas within the UN system;

- Greater transparency and engagement with partner governments as to their priorities; and
- A coherent set of policy, operational and funding modalities aimed at establishing a strategic partnership at two levels: regional and national, mutually complementing and supporting each other.

UNODC is committed to elaborating the Regional Programmes in line with the following principles:

- ***Aligned with Paris Declaration principles on aid effectiveness:*** The Regional Programmes are designed to promote partner countries' ownership, be aligned with national policies and priorities, be effectively coordinated with other donors/development agencies, and support mutual accountability for results.
- ***Programmatic and results-focused:*** Regional Programmes intend to achieve results over the long term as it is not driven by ad-hoc project initiatives. It is focused instead on achieving sustainable reforms in line with international and national commitments on rule-of-law and public health matters related to UNODC's mandates.
- ***Focused on transnational and cross-border challenges:*** In addition to promoting capacity-building at the national level, UNODC will make full use of its comparative advantages to facilitate the establishment of legislative and policy norms, the promotion of coordinated cross-border responses, and the exchange of comparative data and information. This would ensure a cross-border, subregional and integrated dimension in the fight against illicit trafficking (e.g. human beings, arms, drugs, natural resources and money).
- ***Based on partnerships:*** Programme activities will be based on partnership arrangements that clearly articulate mutual responsibilities and accountability for results.
- ***Responsive to need:*** The Regional Programmes are designed to focus on key priority areas addressing the main challenges of the concerned countries. They will be reviewed on an annual basis, and revised or modified as required as a result of lessons learned during implementation.

#### **IV. The process of developing Regional Programmes**

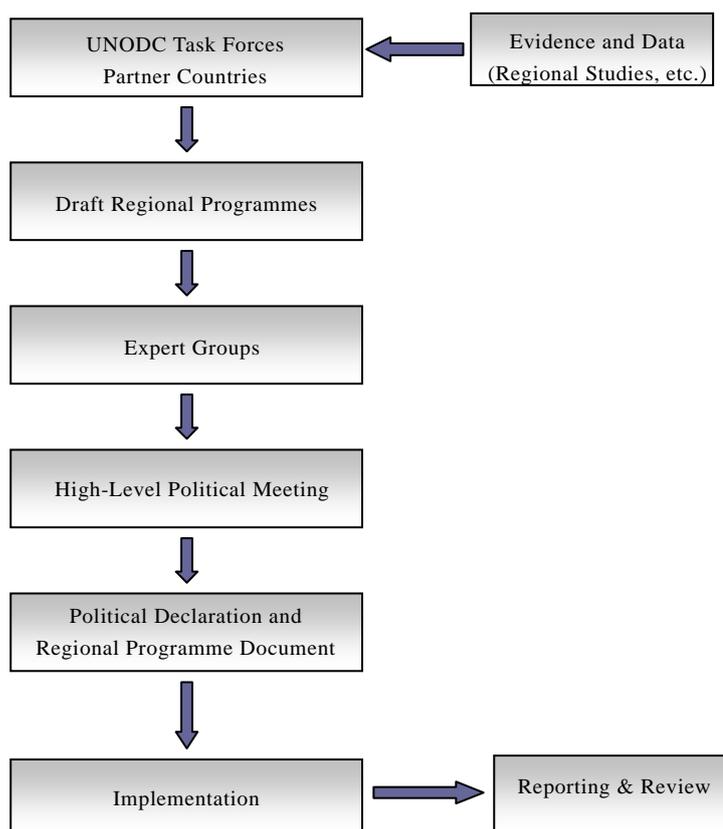
In the past six months, UNODC has been working to develop the following five Regional Programmes:

- Central America;
- The Caribbean;
- Eastern Africa;
- East Asia & the Pacific; and
- The Balkans.

These five regions were chosen both on an assessment of the needs of the regions themselves and based on the fact that UNODC's programmes in the above regions

had been either weak or the Office had lacked a presence altogether. During the course of 2009, three additional regional programmes will be developed for West Africa, North Africa and the Middle East and the Southern Cone. The latter Programmes will build on UNODC's current work in each of the regions concerned.

In order to develop Regional Programmes, and as illustrated in the diagram below, a similar process has been adopted in all cases, with the overall objective of ensuring both an internally coherent response as well as emphasizing the importance of adequate levels of consultation with the Member States of the concerned regions.



In summary, the initial draft Regional Programme is a product of an internal UNODC Task Force, combining both geographic and thematic expertise, working closely with the field. The Regional Programme is evidence-led and draws on existing data contained in regional and/or global studies. The result is a framework document outlining proposed priorities, as well as areas where UNODC is already active, which is submitted to relevant Member States for their comments and inputs. Once comments have been incorporated, the draft framework document is discussed by experts from all countries of the region, and other relevant regions, as well as international or bilateral donor partner countries.

The document which emerges from the expert group meeting is submitted to a High-Level Political Meeting of relevant Ministers from Member States of the region concerned. The result of this meeting is a political declaration or action plan detailing the key priorities and steps to be taken to ensure effective implementation with high-level political buy-in.

## V. Regional Programme consultations to date

With support from several donors, a number of regional meetings and expert groups were held in late 2008 and early 2009 to ensure full political support for the regional programme approach. These are the following:

- **West Africa – Praia, Cape Verde (28-29 October 2008):** The ECOWAS Ministerial Conference, organized in partnership with UNODC, UNOWA and EC and hosted by the Government of Cape Verde, resulted in a Political Declaration and an Action Plan, adopted by ECOWAS Heads of States Summit in December 2008. The Action Plan will be supported by an “Implementation Plan” which will include a budget, specific national and regional initiatives and be formulated with the support of UNODC and other partners. It has been recommended that the Action Plan be monitored at the level of the UN Security Council to evaluate progress and maintain the political commitment and international and financial support.
- **East Asia and the Pacific – Bangkok, Thailand (12 November, 2008):** The Regional Programme on the rule of law and health and development (2009-12) has been conceptualized based both on the UNODC strategy and consultations with Member States as to their priority needs during 2008. It was then presented and discussed at a forum in Bangkok with partner countries, international organizations and the donor community. The programme will be supported by a unified and a robust management system of fund allocation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.
- **Eastern Africa – Nairobi, Kenya (2-4 February 2009):** The Government of Kenya and UNODC jointly organized a Regional Expert Meeting to discuss the regional programme “Promoting the rule of law and human security in Eastern Africa, 2009-11”. Experts on law enforcement, organized crime and justice/integrity from 13 countries in the regions, UN partners, multilateral and bilateral development partners and representatives of donor countries based in Nairobi attended the meeting.
- **Caribbean – Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (17-20 February 2009):** The Government of the Dominican Republic and UNODC jointly organized an expert group meeting and a “Ministerial Conference on Illicit Trafficking, Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism as Challenges to Human Security and Development in the Caribbean” to discuss the regional programme “Promoting the rule of law and human security in the Caribbean (2009-2011)”. Participating Ministers of Public Security and Justice endorsed and signed a Political Declaration launching the proposal of establishing the Santo Domingo Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism as a technical assistance project facilitating periodical consultations and strategic thinking between partners at the expert and policy levels, “in order to jointly discuss,

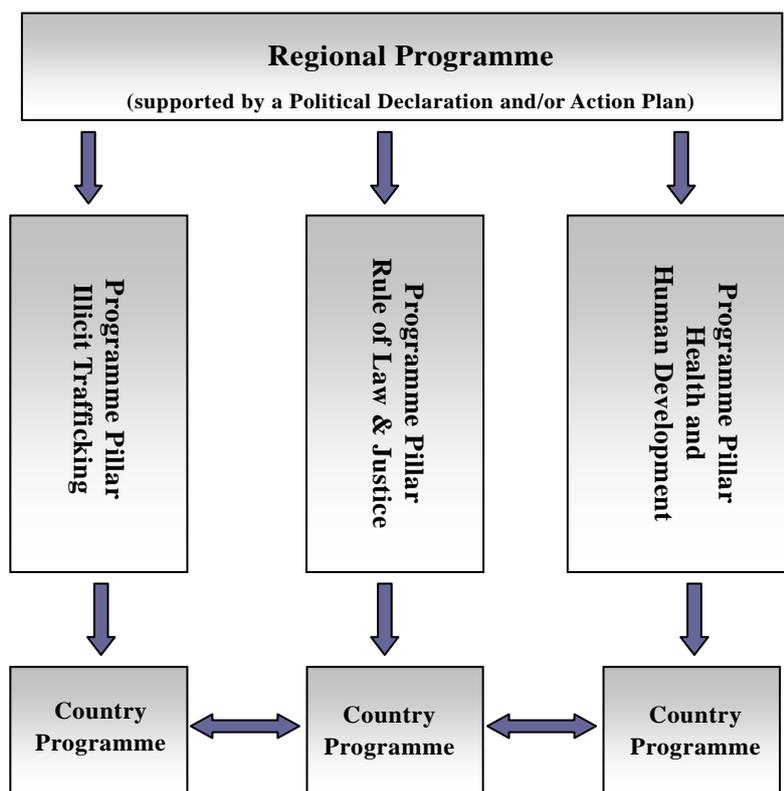
identify, and set in motion coordinated actions to stem the increasing levels of illicit drug trafficking from, to and through the Caribbean and address the drug abuse situation in priority countries.”

Two additional meetings will be conducted in March 2009. The first in San José, Costa Rica (26-27 March) focuses on the Central America Regional Programme of Intervention<sup>1</sup> and the second in Belgrade, Serbia (30-31 March) focuses on the Regional Programme in the Balkans.

## VI. The structure of Regional Programmes

The resulting Regional Programme broadly consists of a political agreement, declaration or action plan which outlines priorities and strategic focus areas as well as a more detailed programme document which lists activities and costings to ensure effective implementation to respond to the priorities identified.

The structure and content of each Regional Programme would, given different needs and priorities, vary from region to region. The overriding objective of UNODC is to ensure the maximum ownership from Member States in each region for the approach taken and the priorities identified. A broad overview of the emerging Regional Programmes are provided below.



<sup>1</sup> The joint UNODC and SICA Programme of Intervention to Strengthen the Action Plan of the Security Strategy for Central America and Mexico.

In all cases, Regional Programmes are assuming a form where several Programme Pillars have been identified (for example, illicit trafficking and organized crime) and a specific set of activities are developed to increase capacity within the region to meet the identified challenge. The Programme Pillars will generally consist of activities that have a cross-border or regional focus. Under each Programme Pillar specific country-based programmes in the relevant areas will be built as the needs are identified. Based on this approach, therefore, there is no contradiction between an overall regional approach to programme development and the requirement to meet specific country needs. The issue of data, research and analysis will be a key issue cross-cutting all of the Pillars.

Each Pillar will constitute key building blocks and will consist of a defined set of activities on a key topic (for example, money-laundering under a Programme Pillar devoted to illicit trafficking). Donors may wish to provide funds to support the Pillar as a whole or earmark funds for specific activities of that Pillar.

The design of Regional Programmes will follow the results-based management approach. The overall aim will be to set impact indicators for each Programme Pillar and to provide a clear report of the success achieved in implementing the Regional Programme as a whole.

## VII. Conclusion

As described, the approach under way to develop and implement Regional Programmes will have a significant impact of UNODC's field programme as well as the modalities in which activities are both funded, measured and reported on. While a substantial amount of effort has already been undertaken in the five regions outlined above, it is worth emphasizing that Regional Programmes are very much a work in progress. It is clear that different Regional Programmes may adopt, based on inputs from Member States, both different approaches and achieve a different final structure. From the perspective of UNODC this diversity is healthy as it will be the result of specific consultations on the needs, priorities and particular approaches that Member States themselves consider appropriate in their own regions.

A key indicator of success in taking the current process of Regional Programme formulation forward would be to translate the regional programmes into a dynamic set of integrated technical assistance activities on the ground. In conclusion, it is worth reiterating that support for such activities would allow Member States to:

- Contribute to a change in organizational culture by funding concrete activities to put integrated programming into practice;
- Support the upgrading of programming and UNODC's field presence in designated regions or countries;
- Promote a single and integrated Office, rather than a fragmented organization; and
- Foster a culture within UNODC that seeks to harness the resources of the organization to impact positively on integration within the UN system.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the current UN reform in the field is allowing more space for cross-cutting themes, normative agendas and a better utilization of the expertise of all UN agencies. The multidisciplinary expertise available in the UNODC Regional/Country Offices would provide policy and technical advice on mainstreaming crime and drug control measures in regional development strategies. In this context, UNODC assistance would increasingly evolve from project-based assistance to a more flexible and integrated programmatic approach. The above development in field programming would mean inter alia that gradually UNODC would be able to move towards a more unified and simplified system of fund allocation, monitoring of implementation of activities, and reporting.

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