



High Level Panel discussion:
***“Sustainable Development and the World Drug Problem:
Challenges and Opportunities”***

ECOSOC Chamber, 15 July 2014, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Concept note

(as of 7 July 2014)

A. Background

In 2009, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), a functional commission of ECOSOC, adopted the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to counter the World Drug Problem¹, which is the key policy document guiding action by the international community on drug control matters. (Adopted by the General Assembly as *Resolution 64/182*). Paragraph 40 [ii] of the Political Declaration “recommend[s] that the Economic and Social Council devote a high-level segment related to the world drug problem.”

In July 2013, ECOSOC held a panel discussion during the general segment of its substantive session entitled: *“Focus on the Vienna-based Commissions and the importance of drug control, crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of the post 2015 development agenda, including the issue of human trafficking,”*² during which the proposal was made that the Council consider holding a related high level event during its substantive session in 2014. (Such event could also include discussion of the outcome of the high-level review of the Political Declaration to be conducted by the CND in March 2014³, including the context of the broader development agenda). By holding a High Level Panel on “Sustainable Development and the World Drug Problem”, ECOSOC could support the recommendation contained in operative paragraph 40 of the Political Declaration that the Council devote one of its high-level segments to a theme related to

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28), Chap. I, sect. C.*

²For more info on the Panel Discussion see: *“Focus on the Vienna-based Commissions and the importance of drug control, crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of the post 2015 development agenda, including the issue of human trafficking”* at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/ecosoc-2013.html>

³ Paragraph 40 of the Political Declaration provides that the CND, at its 57th session in 2014 should conduct a high-level review of the implementation by Member States of the Declaration and Plan of Action. Said review will take place in Vienna from 13-14 March 2014.

the world drug problem, as well as make a valuable contribution to the substantive preparations for the General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem, to be held in 2016 (UNGASS 2016).⁴

B. Substantive focus

The many manifestations of the world drug problem (including the lack of citizen security, food security and lack of sustainable livelihoods, the complex relationship between drugs and violence, corruption and the undermining of state institutions) have an impact on the ability of member states to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In recent years, the CND has adopted a number of resolutions referring to the MDGs. These include: with regard to alternative development - goals 1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger) and 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability); with regard to injecting drug use - goal 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases); and through acknowledging the specific needs of women and girls in the context of comprehensive and integrated drug demand reduction programmes and strategies - goal 3 (promoting gender equality and empowering women).

Member States have recognized that the world drug problem has an impact on economic growth and development. They have likewise recognized that the mandate of the CND is closely related to the existing MDGs, and have supported the consideration of alternative development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, either as an additional development goal or in the context of existing targets on poverty reduction.

The Plan of Action makes a number of references to development issues, in particular in those paragraphs related to alternative development.⁵ The CND has acknowledged the work of UNODC in assisting Member States to achieve the MDGs. In 2013, at its 56th session, the CND recommended through the Council for adoption by the General Assembly a resolution entitled, “*United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development*”, adopted as General Assembly Resolution 68/196, reaffirming that

⁴ Paragraph 40 of the Political Declaration recommends that the General Assembly hold a special session to address the world drug problem. In its *resolution 67/193*, entitled “*International cooperation against the world drug problem*,” the Assembly decided “to convene, in early 2016, a special session on the world drug problem, following the high-level review of the progress made in the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, which will be conducted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-seventh session in March 2014, and that the special session will review the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments”. In its *resolution 68/197*, entitled “*International cooperation against the world drug problem*”, adopted in December 2013, the Assembly “requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the United Nations organ with the prime responsibility for drug control matters, to engage in the preparatory process for the Special Session, including by presenting its proposals from the CND 57th and 58th sessions through the Economic and Social Council in support of the UNGASS preparatory process, including progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on the International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, to be considered by the General Assembly, starting at its 69th session”

⁵ Plan of Action on international cooperation towards an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem: Para. 43 (d) recommends action on measuring the qualitative and quantitative impact of alternative development and drug crop eradication programmes with respect to the sustainability of illicit crop reduction and socio-economic development; Para. 45 (d) recommends action in respect of the inclusion in national development strategies of integrated and sustainable alternative development programmes, recognizing that poverty and vulnerability are some of the factors behind illicit drug crop cultivation and that poverty eradication is a principal objective of the Millennium Development Goals; Para. 47 (a) reads: “[Member States should] tackle alternative development in a larger development context through a holistic and integrated approach, taking into account the Millennium Development Goals, with the priority of eradicating poverty.”

development-oriented drug policies and programmes should be undertaken in accordance with the MDGs, and also taking into account the specific situation of countries and regions and, where appropriate, security concerns. Member States most recently reaffirmed the importance of alternative development in the 12 March 2014, Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the CND of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. See E/CN.7/2014/L.15, at paras. 16, 19, 26-27, and 32-34.

Alternative development programmes have produced sustainable reductions in some areas under illicit crop cultivation, in particular coca bush cultivation.⁶ Programmes which have effectively reduced illicit crop cultivation and improved the socio-economic situation of small farmer households have included comprehensive and integrated interventions targeting the improvement or building of necessary infrastructure, improvement in the quality and yield of food crops, to address food insecurity, introduction and improvement of productive cash crops to generate sustainable income, and the introduction of best practices in agricultural production and environmental protection. The financing of alternative development and the facilitation of market access for commercially viable products stemming from former illicit crop regions were made possible by donors and the international community and have proven to be a pillar of sustainable crop control strategies within a framework of long-term commitment. The United Nations has exercised a catalytic role to promote South-South cooperation, foster the exchange of experiences among Member States and provide field-based technical assistance.

Sustainable reductions in illicit crop cultivation have been best obtained with a combination of alternative development and eradication programmes and when alternative development programmes have been designed within broader development frameworks. Sustained reductions have been achieved in illicit crop cultivation in States where development-oriented drug control was undertaken through a proper sequencing of alternative development, eradication and law enforcement and where key stakeholders were involved in all phases of project design. Data on illicit crop cultivation reveal that where illicit crop eradication was carried out without a commensurate programme in alternative development, reductions in illicit crop cultivation were not sustainable. In addition, strategies to add value to products and to encourage entrepreneurship, such as small farmer-led enterprises, have had a significant impact on the success of efforts to dissuade farming communities from engaging in illicit crop cultivation and have, at the same time, improved living standards for small farming households and introduced the concept of a “culture of legality.”⁷ It should also be noted that effective alternative development strategies rooted in the local area development paradigm also contribute to creating micro-systems, as it were, where the rule of law, good governance and security

⁶ See “Contribution by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to the high-level review of the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, to be conducted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2014,” UNODC/ED/2014/1, available at: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CND/session/57.html>

⁷ This was particularly visible in the case of 14 UNODC-supported farmer-led enterprises, which accessed international markets for alternative development products in excess of \$150 million in 2012 and have not reverted to illicit crop cultivation.

are often seen as valuable common goods and help to create virtuous cycles that can reinforce and perpetuate the gains associated with creation of alternative livelihoods. Environmental conservation strategies have also proved important in the framework of illicit crop eradication and alternative development. Environmental protection strategies have allowed farming communities to benefit economically through sustainable natural resource management coupled with innovative eco-tourism schemes.

C. Expected outcome(s)

By holding a High Level event on the world drug problem, the Council will give the world drug problem enhanced and focused attention and would also fulfil its role in coordinating the preparations for, and follow-up to, major United Nations conferences. The event could also foster cooperation and to promote synergies with other subsidiary organs of the Council, as well as to engage a broader constituency, including civil society and the private sector.

The High Level event will provide all relevant stakeholders with an opportunity to consider and discuss drugs issues from a broader ECOSOC perspective.

As an outcome of the High Level event, the President of ECOSOC may prepare a Chair's summary, which could be circulated to all Member States and might be taken up by the Council for further action.

Moreover, as the post 2015 development agenda was intrinsically linked to sustainable development, Member States stressed the need for a comprehensive approach and supported further involvement of the CND in the discussions leading to the establishment of the post-2015 development agenda, in close coordination with ECOSOC and other United Nations bodies and entities. Another outcome of this event could be for the functional commissions of ECOSOC to contribute, within their respective mandates, to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development

From these different angles, the event would also be a concrete example of implementing General Assembly Resolution 68/1 on *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council*, in which the Member States have called for a closer engagement between the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

D. Format

The High Level Event will be held in the format of a panel discussion to be followed by an interactive-debate with the floor, and will be Chaired and moderated by the Vice President of ECOSOC, H.E. Ambassador **Oh Joon**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, who will deliver brief opening remarks. Opening remarks by the President of ECOSOC, H.E. Ambassador **Martin Sajdik**, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in New York; Mr. **Ban Ki-Moon**, Secretary General of the United Nations (via video-message); and, Mr. **Yury**

Fedotov, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (via video-message) will also be invited.

Panellists include:

H.E. Ambassador **Khaled Abdel Rahman Shamaa**, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in Vienna, Chair of the 57th session of the CND,

H.E. Mr. **Norachit Sinhaseni**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations,

Representative of **Peru**, to speak on sustainable development from the alternative development angle,

Dr. **Mary Chinery-Hesse**, Commissioner from the West Africa Commission on Drugs to speak on sustainable development from the violence/corruption/institutions angle,

Dr. **Lochan Naidoo**, President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB),

Mr. **Aldo Lale-Demoz**, UNODC Deputy Executive-Director, to address the issue of alternative livelihoods.

Proposed timing:

10:00-10:30: Opening session

10:30-11:45: Panel Discussion

11:45-12:50: Interactive Dialogue (interventions from the floor from Missions, ECOSOC accredited NGOs and UN agencies)

12:50-1:00: Closing