



**Preparations for the high-level segment
of the 52nd session of the Commission on
Narcotic Drugs**

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**Open-ended intergovernmental expert working group
on international cooperation on the eradication of
illicit drug crops and on alternative development**

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Discussion note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

This discussion note was prepared pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 51/4, which decided, inter alia, to establish open-ended, intergovernmental expert working groups to work in a coordinated manner, on the following topics, which correspond to the subjects of the action plans, declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session: (a) Drug demand reduction; (b) Supply reduction (manufacture and trafficking); (c) Countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation; (d) International cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development; (e) Control of precursors and of amphetamine-type stimulants.

The open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on international cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development will discuss results achieved by Member States in achieving the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, limitations and problems encountered as well as the way forward in the field of International cooperation on the eradication of illicit drug crops and on alternative development. The conclusions and recommendations of this working group will be transmitted to the intersessional meetings of the Commission to provide material on which the drafting of the outcome for the high-level segment can be based.

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I. Introduction

1. At the twentieth Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) on countering the world drug problem, Member States adopted the “Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development” that identified five issue areas that Member States should consider when addressing illicit crop cultivation:

- The need for a balanced approach to confront high levels of illicit cultivation;
- Strengthening of international cooperation for alternative development;
- Improved and innovative approaches to alternative development (AD);
- Enhancing monitoring, evaluation and information sharing; and
- The need for law enforcement in controlling illicit crops.

II. Significant and measurable results in the field of alternative development

2. The trend over the 10 years of UNGASS with respect to the illicit crop cultivation of opium poppy and coca had been relatively stable. Total opium poppy cultivation in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand decreased from an estimated 157,900 ha in 1998 to 29,400 ha in 2007, a reduction of 81% in nine years. This had clearly been offset by production in Afghanistan, but even in this case there were signs of stabilization or even a small decline in 2008.

3. Between 1998 and 2006, the total area under illicit coca bush cultivation in the Andean countries of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru declined by 18%, from 190,800 to 156,900 ha.

4. The latest estimates indicated that approximately 42,000 tons of cannabis herb were produced in 2005, suggesting stabilization or even possibly a small downward trend.

5. From the baseline year of 1998, Member States had developed and improved national plans and strategies to address illicit drug crop cultivation, including AD, eradication and other law enforcement measures.

6. Analysis of the last 10 years suggested that progress had also been achieved on inclusion to plans and programmes of key issues, such as gender consideration, participatory approaches and environmental protection, among others.

7. Analysis of country programmes in Latin America suggested that AD interventions had become much more comprehensive and that emphasis was now on value-added, marketing and provision of other services. AD interventions were also much more environmentally friendly and looked to organic production and a focused on agro-forestry within a framework of renewable resource management.

8. Some progress had been achieved in raising awareness of the cross-cutting nature of AD and illicit crop cultivation. The World Bank, for example, had formally addressed

the issue of illicit poppy cultivation and recognized the role that poppy cultivation had on small farmer and national development in Afghanistan.

9. Some Member States had moved from dependence on international cooperation and outside resources to utilizing national resources to fund AD. Although this was not the general rule, it was a positive development.

10. The ground-based and aerial-based monitoring techniques had been improved and now provided useable information with which to design, implement and monitor AD and crop reduction activities. The coordination between UNODC and the national governments in this case had proven to be very successful.

III. Limitations and problems:

11. The estimated global cocaine production stood at 984 tons in 2006, a 19% increase compared with 1998. This trend can be attributed to improved cultivation techniques, such as the introduction of high yield varieties and the increase in plants per hectare.

12. Although monitoring of illicit crops in some Member States had been a success, there continued to be a lack of efficient monitoring techniques to gauge cannabis cultivation and resources to carry out this work.

13. Recognizing the importance of a balanced approach, some interventions continued to be improperly sequenced – focusing efforts and resources on eradication without due regard for livelihoods.

14. Financial constraints continued to pose difficulties for the sustainability of AD programmes, with only a few States able to provide national budget resources and/or succeeding in securing the long-term support of donors and the international financial community. Clearly, national and international political and financial commitment for AD had been insufficient.

15. The fact that Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Country Assistance Strategies (CASs) did not take into account illicit crop cultivation and its impact on national development was a major problem and hindered the allocation of resources or broadening the coverage of AD.

16. The reach of AD assistance had been limited with coverage reaching only an estimated 23% of farmers in the Andean region and 5% in Asia.

17. Vague or ambiguous drug laws in some Member States also posed difficulties in designing, marketing and implementing AD and illicit crop reduction activities.

18. Obstacles to trade such as high tariffs, national subsidies and protectionist policies had hindered the success of AD and the marketing and trade in products derived from these programmes.

19. Donor policies and programmes with little flexibility had increased the difficulties Member States encountered when trying to implement coordination mechanisms or be proactive to address urgent issues.

20. In the Andean countries, coca-growers had identified the lack of viable, stable markets as a major obstacle to achieving AD, in addition to poor roads, lack of credit and the absence of agro-industry. In South-East Asia, in addition to many of the same difficulties, the ethnic issue was always at the forefront of discussion, and the focus was on gaining entrance to national society and access to its services.

21. Illicit drug crop cultivation and drug production continued to have negative effects on the environment, such as the clearing of forests through slash-and-burn cultivation, the indiscriminate use of herbicides and pesticides, overexploitation of forest resources and the pouring of waste products (precursor chemicals) into rivers. This damage not only threatened the flora and fauna, but also exacerbates the difficulties in implementing future productive projects.

IV. The way forward:

A. Recommendations to Member States

22. Facilitate public and private sector funding to ensure systematic and continuous implementation of rural development in areas of illicit crop cultivation.

23. Ensure that cannabis be included in any future action plan or declaration.

24. Thoroughly research and understand links between development and security and recognize that one cannot succeed without the other.

25. Set a target of 50% coverage of AD programmes for farmers engaged in illicit crop cultivation.

26. Ensure a comprehensive approach to identification of market demand, production assistance, and secure stable markets with fair prices for goods. National markets should be assessed prior to seeking international markets.

27. Monitor progress through a host of indicators, not only illicit crop production estimates, but also human development indicators evaluating the social and economic impact of interventions on primary stakeholders.

28. Ensure consistency of policies, methodologies and sustained resources amongst all stakeholders involved in programme development and implementation including ministries, local government and civil society organizations.

29. Adopt an integrated approach that supports social, economic and private sector development in areas in which illicit crops are grown.

30. Ensure that the values, traditions and customs of local communities and civil society are reflected in national policies and laws.

31. Include support for efforts aimed at reducing the dependency on illicit drug crop cultivation within the strategic objectives of national development policies (i.e. PRSPs, CASs).

32. Set a target of allocating 10% of national agricultural development budget to alternative development in countries where illicit crops are widely grown.

B. Recommendations to International Agencies

33. Recognize that development assistance is long-term and programmes must be fully financed and given ample time to make an impact.

34. Mainstream counter-narcotics and AD approaches into the broader development agenda. The development community – in particular the international financial institutions – must incorporate counter-narcotics approaches into their wider development agendas. The counter-narcotics community must include development approaches in plans and strategies.

35. Consider proactive development measures, or Preventive Alternative Development, recognizing that the balloon effect is a natural reaction to a short-term and limited vision of development.

36. Agree on a common approach and coordination of sector programmes within a national territory in order to implement effective programmes.

37. Ensure that eradication is not undertaken until small farmer households have viable and sustainable livelihoods and interventions are properly sequenced.

38. Do not make development assistance conditional on reductions in illicit drug crop cultivation.

39. Provide long-term and flexible funding with firm sectoral approach.

40. Be innovative in raising new sources of funding for interventions aimed at reducing dependency on opium poppy and coca (for example, climate change, Millennium Account, debt swap, etc.).

C. Recommendations to Civil Society

41. Engage at all stages of the project/investment cycle and be encouraged and empowered to actively contribute to the development of policy.

42. Pursue domestic and international alliances of civil society to help with information exchange, develop capacity and boost opportunities for financial sustainability.

43. Promote the exchange of experience (including development and counter-narcotics activities) among many different stakeholders, and support empowerment of social organizations.