



**UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

**Contribution to the
2015 United Nations Economic and Social Council
(ECOSOC)
Integration Segment**

**Note on the contribution of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to the ECOSOC
Integration Segment on “Achieving sustainable development through employment
creation and decent work for all”**

I. Introduction

The present note has been prepared at the request of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, which invited the subsidiary bodies of the Council to provide inputs to the Integration Segment of the Council on issues relating to achieving sustainable development through employment creation, to be held from 30 March to 1 April 2015.

II. Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and “addressing the world drug problem”

In recent years, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs has been considering issues related to the world drug problem in a broader development context and considered the possible links between addressing drug related issues and achieving sustainable development. While achieving sustainable development through employment creation has not been on the agenda of the Commission as such, it has been indirectly dealt with in the **2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integration and Balanced Approach to Counter the World Drug Problem**, the **Joint Ministerial Statement** adopted by the High-Level Segment of the 57th session of the Commission, which reviewed progress made in implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, and in a **number of resolutions adopted by the Commission** since the adoption of the Declaration in 2009.

At its fifty-eighth session in March 2015, the Commission will hold a special segment¹ on preparations for the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/200. One of the interactive discussions to be held during that special segment will have a substantive focus on alternative development: regional, inter-regional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues:

- (i) Drugs, addressing socioeconomic issues and fostering alternative development, including preventive alternative development;
- (ii) Enhancing regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented, balanced drug control policy.

In the **Political Declaration and Plan of Action** Member States noted that the world drug problem undermined, *inter alia*, sustainable development, including efforts to eradicate poverty;ⁱ reiterated that interventions should address vulnerabilities that undermine human development, such as poverty and social marginalization;ⁱⁱ and committed themselves to increasing cooperation in order to counter the world drug problem. It was noted that Member States should, *inter alia*: Deliver comprehensive policies and programmes using a multiagency approach, including health-care, social-care, criminal justice, employment and education agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society, which should take full advantage of the activities of non-governmental and civil society organizations;ⁱⁱⁱ and promote meaningful livelihood activities and employment to instil a sense of purpose and self-esteem in individuals to steer them away from drugs.^{iv} Member States were also asked to consider, where appropriate,

¹ For more information on the special segment and the interactive discussions, see documents E/CN.7.2015/1 and E/CN.7.2015/13

including in their national development strategies, 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; and development organizations and international financial institutions were requested to ensure that alternative development strategies, including, when appropriate, preventive alternative development programmes, were incorporated into poverty reduction strategy papers and country assistance strategies for States affected by the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.^v

The importance of **promoting alternative development programmes in addressing the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances** has also been underlined in a number of **resolutions**, including the adoption by the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Commission, of resolution 68/196 on “United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development”. Pursuant to that resolution, States Members of the United Nations, international organizations, regional organizations, development agencies, donors and international financial institutions, as well as civil society, should apply their utmost efforts, as appropriate, to - amongst others - implement long-term projects and programmes to provide opportunities to fight poverty, diversify livelihoods and strengthen development, institutional frameworks and the rule of law.^{vi} Subsequently, in its resolution 57/1 “*Promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development and proposal to organize an international seminar/workshop on the implementation of the Guiding Principles*”, the Commission called upon Member States and other donors to consider long-term support to alternative development programmes and projects, including preventive alternative development programmes and projects, targeting the illicit cultivation of crops, in order to contribute to the sustainability of social and economic development as well as poverty eradication, including through enhanced development-oriented approaches that implement measures for rural development, strengthen local governments and institutions, improve infrastructure and promote the participation of local communities.^{vii}

On the other hand, the Commission has also addressed the **importance of effective interventions at the demand reduction side** in a number of **resolutions**. Thus, in its resolution 54/5 “*Promoting rehabilitation- and reintegration-oriented strategies in response to drug use disorders and their consequences that are directed at promoting health and social well-being among individuals, families and communities*”, the Commission urged Member States to focus on prevention, treatment, care and related support services for drug users suffering from a drug-related disorder, as well as for their families, to develop effective interventions that lead to social reintegration, including supporting programmes to facilitate the employment of people in treatment and recovery that are tailored to their specific needs in the rehabilitation process, and to ensure interventions for the prevention of drug-related diseases that are directed at promoting health and social well-being among individuals, families and communities.^{viii}

As far as the **specific needs of women** are concerned, the Commission in its resolution 55/5, entitled “*Promoting strategies and measures addressing specific needs of women in the context of comprehensive and integrated drug demand reduction programmes and strategies*”, noted that it was aware that enhanced educational and employment opportunities for women significantly decreases the risk of their drug abuse and encouraged the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to raise awareness among United Nations agencies regarding the need to design educational and employment opportunity modules that may be used in programmes and strategies to prevent drug abuse and dependence and the involvement of women in drug-related crimes.^{ix}

III. Possible action-oriented recommendations

Possible recommendations on alternative development

Member States may wish to consider:

- Developing and implementing, as a substantive element of the comprehensive and balanced crop control strategies, alternative development programmes, including preventive alternative development programmes, as they improve skills and knowledge, create new job opportunities and sustainable legal employment, as well as income-generating opportunities;
- Continuing to create such new employment opportunities, in view of their contribution to health, education, community development, reduction of food insecurity, poverty and inequality and to the improvement of economic conditions;
- Ensuring that such programmes provide a platform for development and strengthening farmer co-operatives and associations, thus empowering communities to increase bargaining power and collectively gain access to markets.
- Member States may wish to consider articulating their national programmes against poverty, as well as on rural production and transformation and related actions, in order to benefit families and associations affiliated with alternative development programmes.

Possible recommendations on access to employment opportunities

- Member States may wish to consider the need to improve access for drug users to social inclusion and reintegration, where appropriate and taking into account national realities, programmes that will develop capabilities and facilitate the employment of drug users, in particular of those in treatment and recovery from drug-related disorders;
- Member States may wish to consider improving the access for adults and youth to education and employment opportunities in the context of drug abuse and crime prevention efforts, while also taking into account the special needs of women and girls in this regard.
- Member States may wish to consider the need to foster increased public-private partnerships and cooperation in promoting and implementing employment opportunities for youth, particularly for those who are at risk due to drug abuse and their connections with gangs structure.

ⁱ *Political Declaration, preambular paragraph 1*: “One decade after the commitments made at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly to address the world drug problem, notwithstanding the ever-increasing efforts and progress made by States, relevant international organizations and civil society, the drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of all humanity, in particular youth, our most precious asset. Furthermore, the world drug problem undermines sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions, including efforts to eradicate poverty, and threatens national security and the rule of law. Drug trafficking and abuse pose a major threat to the health, dignity and hopes of millions of people and their families and lead to the loss of human lives. We are determined to tackle the world drug problem and to actively promote a society free of drug abuse in order to ensure that all people can live in health, dignity and peace, with

security and prosperity”

ii *Political Declaration, paragraph 21*: [We, the States Members of the United Nations] “Reiterate our commitment to promote, develop, review or strengthen effective, comprehensive, integrated drug demand reduction programmes, based on scientific evidence and covering a range of measures, including primary prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, rehabilitation, social reintegration and related support services, aimed at promoting health and social well-being among individuals, families and communities and reducing the adverse consequences of drug abuse for individuals and society as a whole, taking into account the particular challenges posed by high-risk drug users, in full compliance with the three international drug control conventions and in accordance with national legislation, and commit ourselves to investing increased resources in ensuring access to those interventions on a non-discriminatory basis, including in detention facilities, bearing in mind that those interventions should also consider vulnerabilities that undermine human development, such as poverty and social marginalization.”

iii *Plan of Action, Part I. A.2.4(b)*: [Member States should] “Deliver comprehensive policies and programmes using a multi-agency approach, including health-care, social-care, criminal justice, employment and education agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society, which should take full advantage of the activities of non-governmental and civil society organizations.”

iv *Plan of Action, Part I. A. 3.6(b)*: [Member States should] “Promote meaningful livelihood activities and employment to instil a sense of purpose and self-esteem in individuals to steer them away from drugs.”

v *Plan of Action, Part II. D. 2, 45(d)*: [Member States should] “Consider, where appropriate, including in their national development strategies, 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; and request development organizations and international financial institutions to ensure that alternative development strategies, including, when appropriate, preventive alternative development programmes, are incorporated into poverty reduction strategy papers and country assistance strategies for States affected by the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.”

vi *General Assembly resolution 68/196, Appendix, Part B, paragraph 18(c)*: “To implement long-term projects and programmes to provide opportunities to fight poverty, diversify livelihoods and strengthen development, institutional frameworks and the rule of law.”

vii *Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 57/1, operative paragraph 3*: [The Commission] “Calls upon Member States and other donors to consider long-term support to alternative development programmes and projects, including preventive alternative development programmes and projects, targeting the illicit cultivation of crops, in order to contribute to the sustainability of social and economic development as well as poverty eradication, including through enhanced development-oriented approaches that implement measures for rural development, strengthen local governments and institutions, improve infrastructure and promote the participation of local communities.”

viii *Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 54/5, operative paragraph 3*: [The Commission] Also urges Member States to focus on prevention, treatment, care and related support services for drug users suffering from a drug-related disorder, as well as for their families, to develop effective interventions that lead to social reintegration, including supporting programmes to facilitate the employment of people in treatment and recovery that are tailored to their specific needs in the rehabilitation process, and to ensure interventions for the prevention of drug-related diseases that are directed at promoting health and social well-being among individuals, families and communities.

ix *Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 55/5, preambular paragraph 13 and operative paragraph 12*: [The Commission] “Aware that enhanced educational and employment opportunities for women significantly decrease the risk of their drug abuse and dependence and their involvement in drug-related crimes” and “Encourages the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to raise awareness among United Nations agencies regarding the need to design educational and employment opportunity modules that may be used in programmes and strategies to prevent drug abuse and dependence and the involvement of women in drug-related crimes”.