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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Drug abuse control activities in the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly the following comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Drug Abuse Control Activities in the United Nations System" (A/39/646): comments of the Secretary-General (annex I) and comments of the Executive Heads of organizations concerned within the United Nations system (annex II).

* A/40/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX I

Comments of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Secretary-General welcomes the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/39/646) of 12 November 1984 and the constructive recommendations made for improving co-ordination of the drug abuse control activities within the United Nations system. The report and comments thereon received from Executive Heads of various competent organizations (see annex II) have come at an opportune moment. The growing scourge of the drug phenomena has alarmed more States than ever before, and this has resulted in a keen interest in seeking viable solutions through greater control on a more co-ordinated basis. Moreover, the deep concern of Member States in this regard is quite evident, as seen in the numerous discussions and negotiations which have taken place in the international community, particularly in Latin America, and during the most recent sessions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

2. Before commenting on specific recommendations made by the Inspectors in the report, the Secretary-General wishes to elaborate on a few points:

(a) Paragraph 16: It should also be mentioned that the Division of Narcotic Drugs undertakes a number of activities at the subregional, regional and interregional levels in addition to the assistance provided to Member States mentioned in the first two sentences of paragraph 16. The Division organizes training through seminars and workshops at the regional level for drug law enforcement officers and officials involved in reduction of the demand for drugs and arranges for fellowships and study tours for training scientists in the identification of drugs of abuse and training drug law enforcement personnel. To carry out its training responsibilities, the Division produces training material to meet the special needs of drug control programmes. It also acts as a clearing house for the collection and dissemination of information on developments in international drug control. Thus, the Division publishes a quarterly Bulletin on Narcotic Drugs, which for the last two years has been devoted to special issues focusing on such topics as "Forfeiture of the proceeds of drug crimes", "Measures to prevent and reduce drug abuse", "Analysis of the campaign against drug trafficking", "Role of narcotic laboratories in combatting the illicit drug traffic" and "Cocaine". It also publishes an information letter on activities in the area of drug abuse control within the United Nations system, including a system-wide calendar of forthcoming meetings to facilitate co-ordination;

(b) In paragraph 19, the Inspectors make reference to the efforts being made to establish closer links with non-governmental organizations. It is believed that such organizations can play a significant role in combatting drug abuse problems. It is to be noted that certain concrete steps have already been taken, not only by the Division, but also by the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs to enlist the assistance and co-operation of non-governmental organizations in drug abuse problems, including the establishment of a New York-based Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on Narcotics and Substance Abuse;

(c) In paragraph 22 of the report, the Inspectors indicate, inter alia, the range of narcotic activities covered by projects of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), as well as the range of assistance to individual projects per year. It should be pointed out that UNFDAC is moving from the experimental stage of the pilot project approach to a more comprehensive and long-range planning approach known as the master plan concept. It is clear that this approach will be more effective if voluntary contributions to the Fund are significantly increased;

(d) It should be noted that, whereas the size of the UNFDAC budget for 1983 was mentioned in paragraph 22 of the report, comparable information was not provided on the budget of the Division of Narcotic Drugs. The Division has a regular budget of \$4,356,300 for the biennium 1984-1985 and 34 posts, of which 19 are at Professional and higher levels and 15 at the General Service level.

II. MECHANISMS FOR INTER-SECRETARIAT CO-ORDINATION

3. In paragraphs 55 to 58 of the report, the Inspectors indicate the weaknesses of the ad hoc inter-agency meetings and some signs of improvement in their work. The Secretary-General intends to raise the matter at meetings of the Advisory Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). Pending any changes that ACC may wish to introduce in order to improve and strengthen co-operation and co-ordination of drug abuse control activities within the United Nations system the Secretary-General will attempt to ensure that future ad hoc meetings are forward-looking and focus attention on plans and programmes instead of explaining what each agency is doing. It is important, if the meetings are to be more effective, that the level of participation of representatives of the various agencies be raised.

4. Paragraphs 17, 29, 59, 60, 68 and 69 may cause some confusion with regard to the co-ordination functions of the Director of the Division of Narcotic Drugs vis-à-vis those of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs. The Secretary-General wishes to make it clear that the Director will continue to assist the Secretary-General to carry out his responsibilities under the drug control treaties. In discharging these functions, the Director will be working under the direction of the Under-Secretary-General, who has the overall responsibility for co-ordination of all United Nations drug control related activities. The Under-Secretary-General will also assist the Secretary-General to improve co-ordination of drug abuse control activities within the United Nations system and among the Member States of the United Nations, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 9 of its resolution 38/93 of 16 December 1983.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

5. The Secretary-General accepts the Inspectors' recommendation for taking the initiative to propose in ACC positive concerted actions that could be taken on drug abuse control.

Recommendation 2

6. This recommendation reads: "The specialized agencies, particularly those mentioned in General Assembly resolution 34/177, should as requested in that resolution and in resolution 38/93 develop specific drug control programmes and activities for consideration by their member Governments. They should report on them regularly to their governing bodies and there should also be regular reviews of them by ACC." It has been conveyed to the specialized agencies.

Recommendation 3

7. The Secretary-General accepts this recommendation to continue inter-agency co-ordination meetings. He has urged that the level of participation at these meetings be raised.

Recommendation 4

8. The Secretary-General accepts this recommendation in principle. However, because of other official responsibilities, the Under-Secretary-General may not be available to participate in all such meetings.

Recommendation 5

9. The Secretary-General accepts this recommendation. In fact, UNFDAC-financed drug abuse control projects formulated recently include specific conditions requiring Governments involved to enforce the purpose and goals of projects.

ANNEX II

Comments of the Executive Heads of organizations
concerned within the United Nations system

I. UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

1. As paragraph 53 of the JIU report is not complete, the following text, corresponding to paragraph 96 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/193) should be added:

"B. Peru: Technical assistance to a cocoa processing plan in Tingo María

In its continuing efforts to identify the industrial use of alternative crops, UNIDO has developed a project, to be implemented in Peru, to help in substituting cocoa cultivation by providing technical assistance to a cocoa processing plant. This project is to be financed by UNFDAC with UNIDO as executing agency."

II. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2. With the designation by the Secretary-General of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs as the overall co-ordinator of all United Nations drug control related activities, the opportunities for effective co-ordination, especially at the policy-making level, have been greatly strengthened.

3. In order to achieve any meaningful impact with regard to the Inspectors' recommendation 2, it would probably be necessary for the specialized agencies to take initiatives vis-à-vis their governing bodies in order to ensure adequate mandates and funding for specific programmes and projects in support of drug abuse control.

4. Attempts have already been made in this regard by the Division of Narcotic Drugs, but at a level insufficient to meeting the requirements for success.

5. The UNDP Office for Projects Execution believes one of the keys to success on ~~the long, complicated march toward crop substitution~~ is the devotion on the part of the respective national Governments of producing countries of sufficient personnel and funds to implement projects of sufficient magnitude so as to achieve the required "critical mass" of impact. From its experience with UNFDAC-funded projects, such determination has not been readily apparent. As providers of funds for development assistance, the World Bank and the regional banks could without doubt play significant roles in the process of government persuasion.

6. The discussion of the roles of FAO and UNDP in the execution of UNFDAC-funded projects would have benefitted from the presentation of a statement that FAO provides UNDP with four full-time personnel in its fields of competence, as a specific example of inter-agency co-operation at the project level.

III. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

7. It is noted that the report, which contains certain factual errors on the section concerning ILO, was transmitted to the General Assembly on 12 November 1984.

8. ILO has already commented on the drafts of the report on two previous occasions. However, each subsequent draft has contained fresh elements requiring further corrections. The final report is no exception.

9. The report makes reference to the slow rate of implementation of projects. In the case of the ILO project in Burma, it should be pointed out that ILO itself has no direct ongoing supervision over project implementation and at government request only provides occasional specialist consultancy advice.

10. The report would probably more accurately have reflected ILO activities if the following points had been taken into account:

(a) Paragraph 37, line 8: this sentence portrays an accurate accounting picture. However, the actual expenditure was \$US 25,336, from which \$19,521 were deducted. This unspent sum from previous years was returned to UNFDAC at the end of 1983, thus showing an expenditure of some \$5,800 only;

(b) Paragraph 39: the first sentence should have ended "... of drug addicts", as ILO has no role in prevention;

(c) The report is dated October 1984, and because the inter-agency meeting at ILO headquarters was held in September, paragraphs 42 and 56 should have been adjusted for dates;

(d) The last sentence in paragraph 41 should read: "The main ... drug/alcohol abuse in the work setting, its extent, consequences, counter-measures and ways and means of developing occupational programmes.";

(e) The role of ILO in vocational rehabilitation should have been mentioned;

(f) The usual practice for comments of ACC on system-wide JIU reports is to derive from the comments of United Nations organizations a common position leaving it to each organization to add to the comments of ACC its own comments in its specific situation. ILO trusts that this distinction will be followed in preparing the comments of ACC and of the Secretary-General;

(g) ILO has written the Secretary-General welcoming his initiative to increase United Nations system activities in controlling the abuse of illicit drugs and has indicated that further information will follow after the completion of office-wide consultations which are expected at the end of March.

IV. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

11. The JIU Inspectors consulted FAO in the preparation of the report. It finds it generally well-balanced and objective and has no objection to the findings and recommendations made.
12. Further to paragraph 44 of the report, the FAO Council, at its eighty-sixth session, in November 1984, expressed its support "for FAO's close collaboration with the United Nations Division of Narcotic Drugs, and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, as well as for the organization's activities aimed at combating the illegal cultivation of narcotic crops and at crop diversification" (CL 86/Rep, para. 122).
13. With regard to paragraph 45 of the report, we agree that "crop substitution is only effective in a context of integrated rural development". This corresponds to the approach of FAO to the problem, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (A/39/193, paras. 125-127).
14. FAO continues to see its primary role in the area of drug abuse control as concentrated on substitution of drug-producing crops. The introduction of substitute crops is only possible, however, in the context of important policy and budgetary measures as decided by the Governments concerned. FAO is prepared, at the request of Governments, to assist in such programmes and projects, subject to the availability of funds. In fact, as mentioned in paragraph 43, we are actively engaged in activities in Pakistan and Burma.
15. FAO has no objection to the suggestion in paragraph 60 that inter-secretariat issues of co-ordination be brought, when appropriate, to the attention of the relevant ACC committee. In this case, the appropriate body would be the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Programme).

V. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

16. The report has taken previous remarks of UNESCO into account. For the biennium 1986-1987, the adoption of a dual approach to problems relating to the use of legal and illegal drugs is envisaged: on the one hand, by strengthening preventive programmes in formal and non-formal education by encouraging a regrouping into general education programmes of various interdisciplinary areas relating to problems affecting the quality of life and the environment, and, on the other hand, by contributing, in co-operation with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, to the development of a psycho-social approach aimed at assisting young people and adults to overcome their difficulties and facilitate their social rehabilitation.

VI. INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

17. Although ICAO is not mentioned in the JIU report on drug abuse control activities, it generally supports the objectives and recommendations of the report within the scope of its mandate.

VII. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

18. The World Health Organization welcomes the report and is pleased to note that its comments on the draft have been fully incorporated into the final report. It believes that a balanced picture of the prevailing situation has been given. WHO agrees with the recommendations made in the report and is pleased to indicate that its practice concurs with them.

VIII. UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

19. The Universal Postal Union has only recently become involved in combatting illicit trafficking in drugs and confines its activities, as part of the work of the Customs Co-operation Council-Universal Postal Union (CCC-UPU) Contact Committee, to the assistance which postal administrations can give to the organizations with authority in that field. As the report remarks, there is some conflict between applying international agreements on drug abuse control and the provisions of the Acts of UPU. The Executive Council of UPU is well aware of this conflict and instructed the International Bureau to conduct a study on the procedure to be followed by an intermediate administration when closed mail in transit is suspected of containing narcotics or psychotropic substances. On the basis of the legal analysis carried out by the International Bureau and the opinions expressed during consideration of this issue, the Executive Council decided to submit a formal opinion to the Hamburg Congress expressing the point of view of UPU, while not prejudicing any attitude which Customs Services might adopt on the matter. This formal opinion, which was the subject of proposal 2500.4, was adopted by the Hamburg Congress.