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**Twenty-seventh Meeting of Heads of National
Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa**

Hurghada, Egypt, 18-22 September 2017

Draft report*Rapporteur:* Wasilat Audu (Nigeria)**Addendum****Consideration of topics by working groups****Issue (d): Addressing the specific needs of women and girls in the context of the world drug problem**

1. The working group held one meeting on 21 September 2017. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) The exploitation of women and girls in drug trafficking continues to rise, and the intersection between drug trafficking and trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation magnifies the problem;

(b) Women and girls who use drugs face greater stigma and discrimination than men, which limits their access to health and other related social services;

(c) Gender inequalities, lower socioeconomic status, lower educational levels and the marginalization of women continue to be contributing factors leading to women drug dependency and their involvement in drug related crime;

(d) While there is some valuable data available from law enforcement agencies on drug related crimes, regular reporting and use to inform policymaking remains a challenge;

(e) Prevention programmes in family, school and work settings remain limited and require significant scale-up;

(f) While Governments have undertaken efforts to implement gender-sensitive strategies in addressing the drug problem, such efforts vary across the region and remain largely insufficient.

2. The working group drew up the following conclusions:

(a) Comprehensive, gender-specific strategies are needed to increase access to treatment for women and girls who use drugs;

* Available only in Arabic, English and French, which are the working languages of the subsidiary body.



(b) In view of the increase in the population of women involved in the drug trade and imprisoned for drug-related offences, criminal justice systems need to be better equipped to cater to the specific needs of women drug offenders;

(c) Since the majority of women involved in drug trafficking have committed minor offences, and in view of their role as sole or primary caretakers, it is important to consider alternatives to imprisonment;

(d) It is important that law enforcement officials and other professionals who work to counter the drug problem understand the specific needs of women and girls and the multisectoral nature of the world drug problem.

3. The working group adopted the following recommendations:

(a) Governments are encouraged to gather sex and age disaggregated data in community and prison settings in order to better assess the specific needs of women and girls with regard to the drug problem, and to facilitate the development of balanced, evidence-based and cost effective policies, programmes and interventions in context of drug supply reduction, drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS interventions;

(b) Governments should develop and implement drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS policies that are informed by strategic information, tailored to the specific needs of women who use drugs;

(c) Governments are encouraged to ensure proportional sentencing and to develop and implement gender-responsive alternatives to imprisonment, in particular for women who commit minor drug-related offences or women with parental and other caretaking responsibilities, in line with international instruments, such as the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules);

(d) Governments are encouraged to develop coordination mechanisms that foster collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, including government entities, civil society organizations and women who use drugs in order to ensure a balanced, integrated and multisectoral approach related to drug supply reduction, drug demand reduction and HIV/AIDS interventions;

(e) Governments are encouraged to afford women who engage in drug trafficking as a result of coercion, threat of the use of force, or use of force, necessary protection as required by the Trafficking in Persons supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime, if found that those women are victims of trafficking in persons;

(f) Governments, in their efforts to ensure multisectoral policy approaches to the drug problem, should increase the presence of women in law enforcement institutions and provide gender-sensitive training to law enforcement officers and other relevant professionals
