

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: General
16 February 2007

Original: English

Commission on Narcotic Drugs**Fiftieth session**

Vienna, 12-16 March 2007

Items 4 and 11 of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General

Assembly and Organization of the work of the Commission

**Collection and use of complementary drug-related data and
expertise to support the global assessment by Member
States of the implementation of the declarations and
measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth
special session**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 49/1, entitled “Collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session”.

The report summarizes the work undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to implement the resolution, in particular in engaging experts from all geographical regions and from relevant international organizations in the field of drug control, on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session.

It reflects the outcome of the informal expert consultation organized by UNODC from 6 to 8 February 2007 with individual experts and experts from relevant international organizations. The informal expert consultation was made possible by an extrabudgetary contribution by the European Union.

* E/CN.7/2007/1.



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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 49/1, entitled “Collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session”, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acknowledged the process already established by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to assist Member States in their assessment of implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session; called upon UNODC, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to engage with national and regional experts from all geographical regions, as well as experts from relevant international organizations in the field of drug control, on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to support the global assessment by Member States of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session; requested the Executive Director of UNODC, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to submit a report on the results of those efforts, together with recommendations on the collection and use of complementary drug-related data and expertise to the Commission for its consideration with a view to, as appropriate, complementing the information available to Member States and providing them with additional input to make an objective, scientific, balanced and transparent global assessment of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session; and requested the Executive Director to report to the Commission at its fiftieth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present document contains information on the work undertaken by UNODC in implementation of resolution 49/1, in particular in relation to the request contained in paragraph 2 of the resolution. In that regard, UNODC organized an informal consultation with individual experts and experts of relevant international organizations, held in Vienna from 6 to 8 February 2007. The informal expert consultation was made possible by an extrabudgetary contribution by the European Union.

II. Implementation of Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 49/1

3. In order to support the preparation of the fourth biennial report of the Executive Director on the world drug problem (E/CN.7/2007/2 and Add.1-6), in November 2005, UNODC established an internal coordination group, which counted on the participation of all relevant substantive units of UNODC. The group developed and supervised the application of the methodology¹ used to produce the

¹ The common methodology adopted for the preparation of the fourth biennial report on the world drug problem, involved, where applicable: (a) the development of indexes based on the indicators identified in the biennial reports questionnaire covering action plans and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session; those indexes reflect the responses provided by Member States to the biennial reports questionnaire over its four cycles; (b) developing a system for monitoring progress over time based on those core indicators; and (c) the establishment of standardized regional groupings. The methodological approach makes it

fourth biennial report of the Executive Director, based on the information provided by Member States through the fourth biennial reports questionnaire.

4. Pursuant to paragraphs 3 and 4 of Commission resolution 42/11, the coordination group considered how to draw on the expertise and experience available through UNODC global technical assistance programmes and information collected using various questionnaires. In view of the close complementarity, the coordination group took on the task of advising and assisting in coordinating the implementation of and follow-up to Commission resolution 49/1.

Consultations with relevant international organizations

5. The UNODC coordination group identified a number of relevant international organizations that could potentially hold relevant information in the field of drug control.

6. In July 2006, UNODC requested a number of relevant international organizations,² to provide information, data and/or regionally consolidated analyses to complement the assessment of the implementation of the goals and targets set by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. In order to facilitate the provision of information in a structured manner corresponding to the action plans and measures adopted at the twentieth special session of the Assembly and to the achievement indicators identified by the Commission in the biennial reports questionnaire, the request was accompanied by a table showing specific indicators contained in the biennial reports questionnaire. It was noted that that information was intended to complement the information collected through the biennial reports questionnaire and that, pursuant to Commission resolution 49/1, the goal was to ascertain how such complementary information could be brought to bear to assist Member States in the assessment of their implementation of the goals and targets set by the Assembly at its twentieth special session.

7. At that time, the organizations were informed that, subject to resource availability, a second step of the consultative process could involve participation in informal consultations to consider technical and methodological issues related to the utilization of such data.

8. The overall objective of the exercise was to ascertain what drug-related data and information might be available, whether it could be used to complement the information already collected through the biennial reports questionnaire and, if so,

possible to visualize, at the regional level, the degree of progress made over time by Member States in achieving the targets set in 1998, on the basis of the indicators identified by the Commission, as reflected in the biennial reports questionnaire.

² World Health Organization (WHO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), International Maritime Organization (IMO), Interpol, Customs Cooperation Council (also known as the World Customs Organization), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD), European Police Office (Europol), Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), Gulf Cooperation Council, Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS), European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Abuse (EMCDDA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SENDU).

how it might be used to assist Member States with their assessment and review of progress since the holding of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly in 1998.

9. A number of the organizations responded to the initiative of UNODC. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) provided an overview of the data available at the level of the European Union, mapped against the variables in the two main instruments used by Member States for gathering drug-related information to be reported to UNODC: the annual reports questionnaire and the biennial reports questionnaire. In addition, EMCDDA indicated that it might be in a position to prepare an analysis of trends in the European Union.

10. The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) provided information related to the first, second and third evaluation round hemispheric reports of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, which provides information on the efforts of OAS member States on the implementation of agreed goals and targets; those goals and targets largely reflect and match those agreed at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

11. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) provided information from its database on service coverage for intravenous drug users and HIV prevalence among intravenous drug users, as well as the related 2005 report. UNAIDS noted that it might be in a position to provide additional information originating from UNAIDS co-sponsors and related initiatives and activities.

12. The World Health Organization (WHO) provided information related to illicit drug use from its Global Burden of Disease and Comparative Risk Assessment projects.

13. The Customs Cooperation Council (also known as the World Customs Organization) forwarded information related to trafficking in amphetamine-type stimulants for the period 2003-2005, as well as its *Customs and Drugs Report 2005*.

14. Interpol responded with information concerning the current status and trends of implementation of the action plans and measures adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, focusing on the implementation by its members in the areas of precursor control and the illicit manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, following the indicators of the biennial reports questionnaire.

15. The European Police Office (Europol) responded that it would contribute its own report on the drug situation, which could contribute to the global assessment of the implementation of the targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

III. Informal expert consultation held in Vienna from 6 to 8 February 2007

16. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Commission resolution 49/1, UNODC organized an informal expert consultation in Vienna from 6 to 8 February 2007. The consultation

was made possible by a specific extrabudgetary contribution provided by the European Union. The consultation benefited from the participation of experts from relevant international organizations and individual experts with relevant regional and/or thematic expertise, as well as UNODC staff members with specific expertise in the areas covered by the action plans and measures adopted pursuant to the targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. Ten individual experts attended the consultation. In addition, experts from the following international and regional entities attended the consultation: UNAIDS; WHO; Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD); CICAD; EMCDDA; Europol; and Interpol. UNODC was represented by staff members from the following: Division for Treaty Affairs; Division for Operations; Division for Policy Analysis and Public Information; and Secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board.

17. Substantive preparations for consultation were made by the UNODC internal coordination group, which devised specific terms of reference and a programme to guide the proceedings. The principal objectives of the consultation were as follows:

(a) To review the existing framework for analysing drug-related trends at the global level (annual reports questionnaire and biennial reports questionnaire sources and knowledge acquired from UNODC technical assistance programmes);

(b) To review lessons learned from regional monitoring systems, such as the CICAD Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, the European Union Action Plan on Drugs and the ACCORD Plan of Action;

(c) To carry out a comparative analysis of the key components of the different monitoring systems and how they relate to and complement the data of the biennial reports questionnaire;

(d) To identify other sources of potentially complementary information and to advise on possible ways to utilize it.

18. It was noted that the relevant resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs³ related to the preparation of the biennial reports of the Executive Director on the world drug problem, together with Commission resolution 49/1, provided the framework for the expert consultation. In addition, the experts would be invited to review and advise on the methodology developed by UNODC for the analysis of the information provided by Member States through the biennial reports questionnaire. It was expected that the consultation should also lead to recommendations, ideas or proposals that had a common approach for the analysis and presentation of data for all action plans and measures adopted at the twentieth special session, insofar as practicable, as well as proposals regarding reporting on progress towards 2008.

19. The informal consultation was held over three days, with the first day devoted to discussions in plenary meeting and presentations on the various regional monitoring mechanisms, which included an analysis of the degree of complementarity with the data collected through the biennial reports questionnaire. On the second day, the experts were divided into two working groups, one concentrating specifically on the demand reduction aspects of the assessment and

³ Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 42/4, 42/11 and 44/2.

the other group undertaking a detailed review of information related to other control measures covered in the action plans and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. On the third day, the informal consultation considered the outcome of the deliberations of the working groups and agreed on conclusions and recommendations.

20. On 6 February 2007, the experts heard a series of presentations drawing attention to the similarities between regional systems for monitoring national and regional efforts to deal with the diverse manifestations of the drug problem and the indicators contained in the biennial reports questionnaire. The presentations covered various aspects of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism of CICAD, the work of EMCDDA and the work of ACCORD. Those three entities had collected data that could assist in assessing progress by Member States to address the drug problem and could contribute to the regional analyses, which could assist in putting the information gathered through the biennial reports questionnaire in context and facilitate comparisons with the situation in 1998, the baseline year. It was concluded that regional data collection systems provided a relatively high degree of complementarity to the data collected through the biennial reports questionnaire and could also be used to confirm and corroborate trends and assist with the interpretation of data at the regional level.

21. It was recognized that the Political Declaration and the action plans and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session represented a major development in international drug control. It was the first time that the world drug problem had been considered in its entirety by the international community. For the first time, Member States had adopted a set of comprehensive and concrete measures covering all aspects of international drug control, placing specific emphasis on the importance of international cooperation and establishing concrete targets over time. It was noted that, consequently, even what might appear in some cases to be partial progress in some areas should be viewed in the context of the fact that behind the action of Member States was a balanced and multidisciplinary approach.

22. The experts recognized that there were limitations relating to the data provided by Member States through the biennial reports questionnaire, particularly in terms of the number of responses, its reliability and consistency. Nevertheless, the biennial reports questionnaire database provided a good source of information on the efforts by Member States to implement the commitments entered into in 1998. It was noted, however, that the system had not been designed or intended to enable an assessment of the impact of the implementation of those commitments. Consequently, the data provided through the biennial reports questionnaire should not be expected to provide something that it had not been designed to do. However, on the basis of complementary information, it should be possible to provide contextual information that could enable an assessment of the consequences of the drug control efforts by Member States in terms of changes in the drug control situation. In other words, complementary contextual information could facilitate a global assessment that could provide a representation of the impact of the action by Member States in implementing the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

23. The experts reviewed the methodology developed by UNODC for the preparation of the fourth biennial report of the Executive Director (E/CN.7/2007/2

and Add.1-6) and acknowledged that it provided a good representation of the information provided by Member States and facilitated the understanding of progress made by Member States in implementing the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. The experts suggested some methodological refinements that could be tested by UNODC prior to further consideration by the experts with a view to possibly using those refinements in preparing the fifth biennial report of the Executive Director.

24. The experts acknowledged that, in order to permit a degree of impact analysis, it would be necessary to consider other sources of information. Those sources could include other official or authorized government sources, such as those that might be available through regionally consolidated mechanisms or through international thematic mechanisms, for example those established to combat money-laundering (that is Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional bodies). They could provide a source of complementary information and reporting to facilitate a fuller contextual assessment of progress by Member States in each area covered by the reports on the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the Assembly. It was also noted that acquiring and analysing additional complementary information could in itself present certain challenges, particularly relating to how that work was to be done and resource requirements for conducting such an undertaking.

25. Experts were aware of the target year of 2008 for the 10-year assessment of the follow-up to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. It was noted that, given the magnitude of the work, the process would benefit from additional time being made available.

26. The experts undertook a comparative analysis of the key components of the different monitoring systems and how they related to and/or complemented data based on the biennial reports questionnaire, considering the indicators identified in each of the sections of the biennial reports questionnaire, which had been devised specifically to assess the implementation of the Political Declaration (General Assembly resolution S-20/2, annex), the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction (Assembly resolution S-20/3, annex) and the action plans and measures⁴ to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem (Assembly resolutions S-20/4 A to E) adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session. The experts found that a significant degree of overlap and complementarity existed between biennial reports questionnaire indicators and indicators used by regional monitoring systems. That could result in considerable convergence between data based on the biennial reports questionnaire and data available through regional and thematic data-gathering arrangements.

27. The experts agreed that qualitative and quantitative information from regional systems and other international organizations could assist in the contextual analysis of the mainly qualitative information provided by Member States through the biennial reports questionnaires and enhance the reporting to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2008 on assessing the change brought about since the holding of

⁴ General Assembly resolutions S-20/4 A to E: A. Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and Their Precursors; B. Control of precursors; C. Measures to promote judicial cooperation; D. Countering money-laundering; and E. Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development.

the twentieth special session of the General Assembly in 1998. It was noted that opportunities for further accessing that information should therefore be explored. In that connection, CICAD, ACCORD, EMCDDA, Europol and Interpol made concrete offers for UNODC to benefit from information available from their members, including in some cases the provision of regional analyses based on that information that could complement and assist in interpreting data based on the biennial reports questionnaire.

28. Experts recognized that there were particular challenges in monitoring drug control efforts and actions, including in the field of demand reduction, in Africa, as well as in other regions where regional monitoring mechanisms were either not well developed or non-existent. It was acknowledged that, in some regions, the biennial reports questionnaire had provided the only source of regional data on responses by Member States to counter the world drug problem. It was noted that the biennial reports questionnaire had thus been, and would continue to be, a catalyst for action in some regions and that it should not be discontinued; instead consideration should be given to how it might be refined and further developed.

29. In the case of Africa, the situation presented specific additional challenges related to political instability, weak monitoring capability within relevant government departments; lack of dedicated resources due to the fact that drug demand reduction and drug control issues were seen as less pressing priorities in the presence of other challenges, such as health, social and economic challenges. Even when model programmes had been initiated (such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SENDU) and the East Africa Drug Information System (EADIS)), there were difficulties in sustaining them. On the positive side, technological developments were increasing capacities to communicate, share and standardize information. Data collected in Africa by WHO, UNAIDS and other United Nations entities should be accessed. The establishment of regional monitoring systems could be supported by a political framework. It was suggested that the African Union could be the regional political organization that could eventually take charge of such an undertaking.

IV. Recommendations of the experts

30. On 8 February 2007, the experts reviewed and finalized the recommendations made by the two working groups at their meetings held on 7 February 2007. The experts made the recommendations presented below for the consideration of the Commission pursuant to its resolution 49/1. The recommendations were grouped into general recommendations, covering matters concerning the reporting on all action plans and measures adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, and specific recommendations on each of the action plans and measures adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session and on the related sections of the biennial reports questionnaire and the reporting on implementation by Member States of the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the Assembly.

A. General recommendations

31. The experts considered that the 10-year assessment of the progress by Member States in meeting the goals and targets set in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, in 1998, should be anchored in contextual information provided by other international and regional entities through their official data-gathering systems complementing the information provided by Member States through their responses to the biennial reports questionnaire and the annual reports questionnaire. Such a contextualization of the gathered information and analyses could provide a better representation of the actual situation of the drug problem and the responses of Member States thereto and the related impact. Data from other sources, describing trends on similar issues for a comparable period, should be used to complement the data from the biennial reports questionnaire and related analyses, as well as to verify the results in terms of trends and new developments, in addition to assisting in providing explanations of possible data and reporting inconsistencies.

32. The experts were of the view that the integrity of the biennial reports questionnaire database should be preserved and that it would be methodologically inappropriate to seek to mix it with data sets from other systems or to seek the integration of the biennial reports questionnaire data set with other data sets or vice versa.

33. It was recommended that Member States should endeavour to respond fully and timely to the biennial reports questionnaire and, in so doing, to ensure that the sections of the questionnaire were completed by the national authority that possessed the corresponding information.

34. It was also considered that it could significantly contribute to the analysis of responses to the biennial reports questionnaire if Member States, when completing the questionnaire, clearly indicated the time frame to which the specific responses applied, including where information referred to the situation in 1998, in order to facilitate the assessment of progress since the holding of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

B. Recommendations on money-laundering

35. It was recommended that UNODC should seek to gain access and utilize complementary data available from the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF)⁵ and the FATF-style regional bodies to enable a fuller assessment of the implementation of the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

36. It was suggested that there might be additional potential sources of complementary information, such as the World Bank and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, that could provide global coverage and information to enable a fuller assessment of the implementation of the goals and targets set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. In that context, it was suggested

⁵ Specific reference was made to the executive summary under the second round of mutual evaluation and to the reports of the third round of country mutual evaluations.

that UNODC could explore possible avenues of collaboration in relation to that assessment of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

37. In addition to the responses to the biennial reports questionnaire, the Anti-Money-Laundering International Database and the Mutual Evaluation Mechanism of CICAD were acknowledged as complementary sources of information.

38. Notwithstanding the recognition that the additional information that might become available could permit a fuller assessment of the implementation of the goals set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly in the field of money-laundering, it was noted that it would not enable an assessment of the impact of implemented measures to counter money-laundering. It was suggested that, while the latter might be a desirable and feasible exercise, the time frame for developing such a system would fall beyond the 10-year assessment of the implementation of the declarations and measures adopted by the Assembly at its twentieth special session.

C. Recommendations on eradicating illicit crop cultivation and on alternative development

39. It was recognized that the data from the survey conducted jointly by UNODC and Member States on the illicit crop monitoring provided information on the illicit crop cultivation, eradication and gross-planting, which should be used, where possible, as a measure of impact. That information should be supported with data on yields and measures of production. It was also recommended that data for the year 1998 should provide the baseline for comparisons.

40. It was acknowledged that there was currently no accurate global assessment of the level of cannabis plant cultivation and therefore emphasis should be placed on levels of coca bush and opium poppy cultivation. Morocco was the only country where an assessment of the level of illicit cannabis plant cultivation was being made.

41. The impact of development efforts, including alternative development, in areas where illicit drug crops were being produced should also be used to assess progress in meeting the goal set in the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development. Socio-economic data should be obtained from a number of sources, including: (a) Commission on Narcotic Drugs and Independent Evaluation Unit evaluations on alternative development of 2005; (b) relevant regional bodies, such as CICAD and ACCORD; (c) independent evaluations of alternative development projects; (d) sub-national data from Governments, the World Bank and regional banks in key-source countries; (e) relevant research reports from non-governmental bodies and academic institutions; and (f) an assessment of the amount of development assistance, including alternative development, disbursed in areas in which illicit drug crops were being grown should also be undertaken. Data should be obtained from Governments on the amount disbursed per capita.

D. Recommendations on judicial cooperation

42. It was suggested that, in filling the judicial cooperation portion of the biennial reports questionnaire, Member States should also provide information to deal with the following: (a) to clarify the period covered by the responses provided; (b) to seek to reformulate questions currently couched in the negative to avoid possible ambiguities, at least in future versions of the biennial reports questionnaire; and (c) to invite Member States to indicate the date of adoption of specific legal measures and to annex to their responses copies of those legal measures. It was noted that the above-mentioned might be aided by the provision of specific guidance notes in the future.

43. It was recommended that data from other sources could be used to verify the analysis of responses to the biennial reports questionnaires, particularly in terms of trends and new developments, and it was suggested that possible sources of such information might include Eurojust and the Commonwealth Secretariat, among others.

44. A specific offer was made by the expert from Interpol to seek specific complementary information on judicial cooperation from Interpol members through its established reporting systems. It was suggested that Interpol and UNODC could liaise to discuss the feasibility of collecting such complementary information.

E. Recommendations on precursors

45. It was suggested that complementary information from Member States might be obtained through the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs⁶ and agreed that UNODC could explore how that might be accomplished.

46. It was also recommended that information from UNODC technical assistance projects and counterparts could also be used to provide complementary information.

47. Similarly, it was recommended that the International Narcotics Control Board, as the coordinator of Project Prism and Project Cohesion, should be invited to provide complementary information in that area.

F. Recommendations on amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors

48. The experts agreed that there were concrete opportunities to directly bring to bear regional information and data to complement responses to the biennial reports questionnaire concerning amphetamine-type stimulants, specifically with systems where directly comparable data existed (that is, the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism of CICAD, ACCORD and the Drug Abuse Information Network for Asia and the Pacific, and EMCDDA). In addition, there were specific suggestions

⁶ Sessions of the Subcommittee on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East and the meetings of heads of national drug law enforcement agencies, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

on providing information or reports on analyses of regional situations, focusing on those areas (that is, Europol, Interpol), and it was suggested that such avenues should be further explored.

G. Recommendations on demand reduction

49. The experts made recommendations intended to enhance the analysis of data based on the biennial reports questionnaire, as follows: (a) there was agreement on the current use being made of the data, which presented Member States with a summary of progress; (b) the methodology used to develop and underpin the index was valuable, but it was important not to lose some of the detailed information contained in single questions or in the subsections of the section on drug demand reduction in the biennial reports questionnaire. Some detailed information could be provided at the regional level as background information; and (c) UNODC was already in the process of refining an approach for the presentation of a number of indicators on levels of implementation, which would be further reviewed by experts.

50. It was agreed that the most significant subsection on demand reduction in the biennial reports questionnaire was that dealing with tackling the problem prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, reducing the negative health and social consequences. It was therefore recommended that that section should receive greater prominence in the 10-year reporting on the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

51. It was recommended that consideration be given to simplifying the indexes for the section on demand reduction; in that regard, core questions in the biennial reports questionnaire were identified.

V. Beyond the 10-year assessment of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

52. After reaching consensus on the recommendations, the experts devoted some time to brainstorming on possible action beyond 2008, based on the lessons to be learned from the system for monitoring the progress made to date in the implementation of the measures and action plans adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

53. Among the ideas discussed, it was felt that a system for Member States to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on progress being made in implementing drug control measures needed to be maintained beyond 2008. That could involve a simplified and streamlined online instrument that took advantage of technological progress and focused on activities based on key evidence and included impact measurements, in addition to process indicators.

54. Other ideas raised included: (a) the setting up of a regionally distributed drug control assessment and monitoring arrangement, which could be regionally administered by regional organizations, with the determination of the global indicators and the global analysis being done by the United Nations, based on information collected regionally on the basis of globally agreed common standard indicators; such a system could benefit from, inter alia, the experience already

gathered by CICAD, the European Union Action Plan on Drugs, and the ACCORD/ASEAN secretariat; (b) synchronization of calendars among regional and global monitoring mechanisms and adjusting the periodicity of reporting to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; (c) agreement on common global indicators, based to the extent possible on those already collected and used at the global, regional and national levels in order to avoid duplication and the creation of additional data-gathering burdens, to promote complementarity and consistency of data gathered and to promote the building of capacity for the gathering and analysis of data at the national level; (d) simplification of indicators and instruments; (e) focusing of future analyses on key problem areas to facilitate monitoring and reporting, to capture information on the impact of actions implemented and to provide assistance and international cooperation to tackle problems, where required; (f) providing support to the ongoing development of a global monitoring framework for synthetic drugs and, in that regard, exploring the setting up of an arrangement to link existing activities and better integrate, on a systematic and regular basis, forensic and laboratory data and qualitative information on illicit synthetic drugs (that is, the range of products available in illicit markets and the precursors actually used in their manufacture); and (g) exploration of what statistical information might be required to permit an assessment of the impact in the field of judicial cooperation.

55. Above all, it was considered that any follow-up action must be firmly anchored in a political process at the global and regional levels in order to ensure that drug control issues remained high in the global agenda. In that connection, it was suggested that the political momentum of the 10-year assessment of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly should be used to propel the follow-up action and promote the securing of resources for technical assistance for regions that needed it.

VI. Concluding remarks

56. It was in principle established that a second informal expert consultation might be held in the second half of 2007, following deliberations at the fiftieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. That consultation could consider, inter alia, further methodological matters, as well as aspects relating to the mechanisms for reporting complementary information to assist Member States in their 10-year assessment of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.
