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## Commission on Narcotic Drugs

### Sixty-second session

Vienna, 14–22 March 2019

Item 11 of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016, including the seven thematic areas of the outcome document of the special session**

### Canada and United States of America: draft resolution

## **Advancing effective and innovative approaches, through national, regional and international action, to address the multifaceted challenges posed by synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids**

*The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,*

*Reaffirming* its commitment to the goals and objectives of the three international drug control conventions, in particular their fundamental aims to protect the health and welfare of humankind,

*Recalling* the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly held in 2016, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,<sup>1</sup> as well as the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem<sup>2</sup> and the Joint Ministerial Statement of the high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action,<sup>3</sup> and reiterating that the commitments reaffirmed therein are integrated, indivisible, multidisciplinary and mutually reinforcing and are aimed at a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to addressing and countering the world drug problem,

*Taking note* of General Assembly resolution [73/192](#) of 17 December 2018, in which the Assembly reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to ensuring that all aspects of demand reduction and related measures, supply reduction and related measures, and international cooperation are addressed in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>4</sup> with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs

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\* [E/CN.7/2019/1](#).

<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution [S-30/1](#), annex.

<sup>2</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2014, *Supplement No. 8 (E/2014/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).



of States, all human rights, fundamental freedoms, the inherent dignity of all individuals and the principles of equal rights and mutual respect among States,

*Recalling* its resolution 61/8 of 16 March 2018, on enhancing and strengthening international and regional cooperation and domestic efforts to address the international threats posed by the non-medical use of synthetic opioids, in which it called upon Member States to explore more innovative approaches to more effectively address those threats,

*Stressing with grave concern* the international challenge to public health and welfare and law enforcement posed by the non-medical use of synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids, and their illicit manufacture, diversion and trafficking, and reaffirming its determination to prevent and treat the misuse of such drugs and prevent and counter their illicit production, manufacture, diversion and trafficking,

*Noting with concern* that drug traffickers continue to exploit tools of modern commerce to traffic in and exacerbate misuse of synthetic drugs and their precursor chemicals, exploiting, for example, online markets for the illicit sale of synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids, in addition to exploiting the international mail system and express consignment carrier shipments to distribute such substances,

*Underscoring* that intensified action at the national level is required to address the international challenges posed by non-medical use of synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids, including national efforts to implement international scheduling decisions, and stressing that capacity-building at the national level is required for the international community to effectively respond to those multifaceted challenges, and that such action should promote evidence-based, balanced, comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches, incorporating both public health and supply reduction responses in line with the international drug control conventions and with the international drug control policy framework found in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly held in 2016,

*Noting with appreciation* the initiatives of some Member States to advance strategic and targeted national action to address the challenges posed by non-medical use of synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids, including by implementing effective and innovative legislative approaches, such as class-wide scheduling of fentanyl analogues, to enhance controls on those deadly drugs and thereby prevent their misuse for illicit purposes,

*Recognizing* the important role played by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the treaty-mandated roles of the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, in collecting data to inform Member States about the latest trends in drug trafficking and misuse, as well as scheduling recommendations made to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in particular those relating to synthetic opioids,

*Reiterating* the importance of further strengthening existing international, regional and bilateral cooperation to enhance controls on illicit synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids, including through participation in existing online database platforms with a view to gathering and sharing information, on a voluntary basis, on relevant factors to inform the monitoring and analysis of trafficking and use trends related to the non-medical use of those drugs,

*Reaffirming* that the international drug control conventions seek to achieve a balance between ensuring access to and the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under international control for medical and scientific purposes and preventing their diversion and misuse,

*Recalling* the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol,<sup>5</sup> in which the parties recognized that the medical use of narcotic drugs

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

continued to be indispensable for the relief of pain and suffering and that adequate provision must be made to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs for such purposes,

*Recalling also* the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,<sup>6</sup> in which it is recognized that the use of psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes is indispensable and that their availability for such purposes should not be unduly restricted,

1. *Welcomes* the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, to convene, pursuant to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 61/8 of 16 March 2018, the meeting of the intergovernmental expert group on the international challenge posed by the non-medical use of synthetic opioids, held in Vienna on 3 and 4 December 2018, during which it was stressed that advancing national action that incorporated comprehensive, balanced and evidence-based demand reduction and supply reduction initiatives was a key component in addressing that challenge;

2. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop, as part of its comprehensive opioid strategy, in collaboration with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization and based on the discussions of the intergovernmental expert group, a toolkit comprised of technical assistance tools, including national class-wide scheduling models, that can support Member States in identifying and addressing national challenges posed by the non-medical use of synthetic drugs, and encourages the Office to operationalize and disseminate the toolkit by incorporating it into its technical assistance and capacity-building programmes, as appropriate;

3. *Encourages* Member States to make use of the toolkit to inform and implement national strategic interventions that achieve rapid and effective results in interdicting and significantly reducing the manufacture and marketing of and trafficking in dangerous synthetic drugs, in particular synthetic opioids, specific to national contexts;

4. *Acknowledges* the increased trafficking in substandard, counterfeit, falsified or illicitly manufactured opioids posing as legitimate medicines, including oxycodone and tramadol tablets, and invites Member States, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, to reduce that threat, which has been increasingly affecting the health and welfare of humankind, particularly in parts of Africa;

5. *Welcomes with appreciation* the list of fentanyl analogues with no known medical or therapeutic uses, developed by the International Narcotics Control Board, which is a valuable tool used by national practitioners to help States take appropriate measures to reduce their illicit production of and trafficking in those dangerous drugs, and encourages Member States to increase their use of that tool to reduce the illicit supply of those fentanyl analogues;

6. *Calls upon* Member States to increase operational use of article 13 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances of 1988,<sup>7</sup> including by enacting national legislation to implement that article, which is aimed at preventing the use of equipment, particularly tablet presses, in the illicit production and manufacture of narcotic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids;

7. *Encourages* the International Narcotics Control Board, within its existing mandate, to provide guidelines on the most effective ways to prevent trade in and diversion of equipment essential for the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., vol. 1019, No. 14956.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

drugs and psychotropic substances in the context of article 13 of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances of 1988;

8. *Calls upon* Member States to implement the treaty-mandated international scheduling decisions and to consider providing voluntary contributions to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to provide technical and normative support to Member States, upon request, as well as to the World Health Organization Expert Committee on Drug Dependence with a view to reviewing dangerous synthetic drugs for international control;

9. *Also calls upon* Member States to promote cooperation with chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors, as well as information and communications technology companies, including those using cryptocurrencies, to advance action at the national, regional and international levels to curb non-medical use of synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids;

10. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, within existing mandates, to continue to update existing guidelines, including those relating to prescription drug practices, and strengthen resources to prevent and treat the non-medical use of synthetic opioids;

11. *Encourages* Member States:

(a) To promote and strengthen regional and international cooperation in developing and implementing treatment-related initiatives, enhancing technical assistance and capacity-building and ensuring non-discriminatory access to a broad range of interventions, including psychosocial, behavioural and medication-assisted treatment, as appropriate and in accordance with national legislation, as well as to rehabilitation, social reintegration and recovery-support programmes, including access to such services in prisons and after imprisonment, giving special attention to the specific needs of women, children and youth in that regard;

(b) To share best practices, especially with respect to treatment for the non-medical use of synthetic opioids;

12. *Also encourages* Member States, in the context of comprehensive and balanced drug demand reduction efforts:

(a) To implement effective measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of the abuse of synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids, by promoting increased access to and use of prevention and treatment services, including access to naloxone, used for the reversal of opioid overdose, and other opioid-blocking medicines;

(b) To reduce the stigmatization of drug use, which acts as a barrier to accessing health, care and social services, as well as pain relief medicines;

13. *Requests* Member States, where applicable, to continue to provide to the Secretariat, within existing reporting requirements, information on national efforts to address the international challenge posed by the use of synthetic drugs for non-medical purposes, particularly synthetic opioids, and requests the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in consultation with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, within their respective mandates, to report to the Commission at its sixty-third session on any such information received from Member States;

14. *Encourages* Member States and, within their mandates, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization to collect national data, analyse evidence and share information with respect to the illicit production and diversion of and trafficking in dangerous synthetic drugs, particularly synthetic opioids, via the Internet, the international mail system and express consignment carrier shipments, so that the data, evidence and information can be used to enhance the effectiveness of national approaches to curb

those worrisome developments, including by strengthening legal, law enforcement and criminal justice responses;

15. *Calls upon* Member States to fulfil in a timely manner their reporting obligations to the International Narcotics Control Board concerning the use of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and the diversion of, trafficking in and misuse of those substances, as required under the international drug control conventions;

16. *Urges* the International Narcotics Control Board, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, to enhance understanding among national regulators and health-care professionals, including pharmacists based in rural communities, of the treaty-based requirements to ensure access to and availability of internationally controlled narcotic drugs for medical and scientific purposes, and invites the Board to provide an update on this matter to the Commission at its sixty-third session;

17. *Calls upon* Member States to improve access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes by appropriately addressing existing barriers at the national level, including those related to legislation, regulatory systems, health-care systems, affordability, the training of health-care professionals, education, awareness-raising, estimates, assessment and reporting, benchmarks for the consumption of substances under control, as well as international cooperation, coordination and assistance, while concurrently preventing the diversion and misuse of and trafficking in such substances;

18. *Invites* Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for the purposes described above, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations.

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