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Commission on Narcotic Drugs

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Implementation of the international drug control treaties

Follow-up to the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of all commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the world drug problem

**Angola, Australia, Egypt, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Singapore and Thailand:
revised draft resolution**

Improving data collection on, and responses to, the harmful effects of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs,

Reaffirming its commitment to the goals and objectives of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1953 as amended by the 1972 Protocol,¹ the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971² and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988,³ in which States parties express concern for the health and welfare of humankind,

Recalling the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem⁴ of 2019, in which Member States noted with concern persistent and emerging challenges related to the world drug problem, including that the adverse health consequences of and risks associated with new psychoactive substances have reached alarming levels, that synthetic opioids and the non-medical use of prescription drugs pose increasing risks to public health and safety, as well as scientific, legal and regulatory challenges, including with regard to the scheduling of substances, and that the geographical coverage and availability of reliable data on the various aspects of the world drug problem requires improvement,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 976, No. 14152.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1019, No. 14956.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1582, No. 27627.

⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2019, Supplement No. 8 (E/2019/28)*, chap. I, sect. B.



Recalling also all commitments related to the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes and to addressing the challenges posed by the non-medical use or misuse of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances as contained in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem⁵ of 2009, the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action⁶ and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”,⁷

Recalling further the commitment of Member States contained in the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments of 2019 to promote and improve the collection, analysis and sharing of quality and comparable data, in particular through targeted, effective and sustainable capacity-building, in close cooperation with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, as well as with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant partners, including through the cooperation between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Statistical Commission, with a view to strengthening national data-collection capacity in order to improve the response rate and expand the geographical and thematic reporting of related data in accordance with all commitments,

Taking note of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *World Drug Report 2020*,⁸ in which it is noted that non-medical use of pharmaceuticals and other synthetic opioids are a major concern in some regions because of the severe health consequences associated with their use, while also noting that the increased burden on public health caused by the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals, which has emerged in some regions, calls for national policies that strike the right balance so as to provide access to medications, for instance, to manage pain or for palliative care, while avoiding the development of a market for the non-medical use of such medications,

Noting that in the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2019*,⁹ it is observed that while non-medical use of synthetic opioids has been reported on an unprecedented scale globally, this challenge manifests itself in different forms from region to region and involves both substances under international control such as fentanyl and fentanyl analogues and substances not under international control such as tramadol,

Noting also that in the *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2020*,¹⁰ it is indicated that the illicit manufacture and use of and trafficking in non-medical synthetic opioids and new psychoactive substances remain significant challenges for international drug control efforts,

Noting further the concern expressed by the International Narcotics Control Board in its annual report for 2020 about reported shortages of medicines containing controlled substances such as fentanyl and midazolam in some countries, largely driven by significant increases in the need to provide pain relief and sedation for patients with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) admitted into intensive care units, and that the Board encouraged Governments to continue working closely with one

⁵ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2009, Supplement No. 8 (E/2009/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2014, Supplement No. 8 (E/2014/28)*, chap. I, sect. C.

⁷ General Assembly resolution [S-30/1](#), annex.

⁸ United Nations publication, 2020.

⁹ E/INCB/2019/1.

¹⁰ E/INCB/2020/1.

another and with the Board to ensure the global availability of medicines containing controlled substances, especially for those who are most in need during emergency situations,

Mindful of the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on undertaking and improving the collection of data on new drug-related challenges and trends, including on the harmful effects of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances,

Recalling its resolution 62/4 of 22 March 2019, in which the Commission reaffirmed 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, and recognizing that the medical use of narcotic drugs is indispensable for the relief of pain and suffering,

Determined to strengthen national, regional and international action to address the challenges posed by the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, and underlining the importance of data collection and scientific evidence-based analysis, enhancing information-sharing and early-warning networks and developing appropriate national legislative, regulatory, prevention and treatment models,

Expressing its grave concern at the international challenge, in particular to the health, safety and well-being of all humanity, posed by the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, in particular synthetic opioids, and their illicit manufacture, diversion and trafficking, and reaffirming its determination to prevent and treat the non-medical use of such drugs, minimize the adverse health and social consequences associated with their use and prevent and counter their illicit production, manufacture, diversion and trafficking,

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 innovative approaches to more effectively address any threat posed by the non-medical use of synthetic opioids by involving all relevant sectors, such as broadening domestic, regional and international control over synthetic opioids and their precursors, reinforcing health-care systems and building the capacity of law enforcement and health-care professionals to respond to that challenge,

Recalling also its resolution 58/9 of 17 March 2014 on promoting the role of drug analysis laboratories worldwide and reaffirming the importance of the quality of the analysis and results of such laboratories,

Mindful that improved data regarding drug dependence and the risk to public health associated with the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances would facilitate the formulation of scientific evidence-based policies at the national, regional and international levels to address those challenges, including through the application of national control measures on substances that may not be under international control, as appropriate,

Emphasizing the importance of presenting in the annual *World Drug Report* the persistent and emerging trends and challenges of the world drug problem and their possible policy implications,

Recognizing the important role played by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as the treaty-mandated roles of the International Narcotics Control Board and of the World Health Organization, in facilitating informed scheduling decisions on the most persistent, prevalent and harmful substances, including

synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, precursors, chemicals and solvents, while ensuring their availability for medical and scientific purposes,

Welcoming the focus of the thematic discussion of the sixty-third session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the implementation of all international drug policy commitments, held from 19 to 21 October 2020, as follow-up to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem of 2019,

1. *Calls upon* Member States to intensify their efforts to collect data on the harmful effects of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances;

2. *Recalls* the holding of 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, convened by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, pursuant to Commission resolution 61/8 of 16 March 2018, at which it was stressed that advancing national action that incorporates comprehensive, balanced and evidence-based demand reduction and supply reduction initiatives was a key component of addressing that challenge;

3. *Encourages* Member States, in accordance with national legislation, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, within their mandates, to collect national data, analyse evidence and share information with respect to trends in consumption for the non-medical use, illicit production and diversion of and trafficking in synthetic drugs, in particular synthetic opioids, including falsified pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances;

4. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue assisting Member States, upon request, in strengthening and, where appropriate, developing their capacity to collect high-quality data on the harmful effects of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances and to enhance their reporting capabilities for the analysis and dissemination of such data, including by providing, upon request, technical assistance in conducting national drug use population surveys and in improving data on drug-related deaths and the delivery of treatment services with regard to pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, as well as on the causes that drive people to the non-medical use of these pharmaceuticals, in order to improve responses in that regard;

5. *Invites* Member States to provide, on a voluntary basis, information on the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, such as data on their non-medical use and health hazards, if known, as well as diversion channels and trafficking patterns, as appropriate, to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime so that it may provide assistance to Member States, upon request, in order to closely cooperate in tackling those issues;

6. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, within existing resources and mandates, to organize further expert-level discussions on developing best practices for the collection of high-quality data on this international challenge, including the harmful effects of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, as well as responses to the problem of the non-medical use of these pharmaceuticals while ensuring their access and availability for medical and scientific purposes;

7. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to include in its annual *World Drug Report*, as appropriate, and within existing resources, information on the extent of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing

narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, and invites Member States to provide relevant information for that purpose through the annual report questionnaire;

8. *Encourages* the International Narcotics Control Board to continue to develop, in close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, within existing mandates and resources, guidance to assist Member States in establishing effective timely and consistent data collection practices that allow for the proper ability to estimate and assess needs for internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;

9. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, within their existing mandates, to continue to develop the United Nations Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs in order to include information and resources on the collection of data on the harmful effects of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, and to operationalize and disseminate the information about the interventions included in the Toolkit by incorporating it, as appropriate, in the technical assistance and capacity-building programmes of the Office;

10. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen effective, comprehensive, scientific evidence-based demand reduction initiatives covering prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration measures on a non-discriminatory basis, as well as, in accordance with national legislation, initiatives and measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse, including non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, and pharmaceuticals containing tramadol;

11. *Also encourages* Member States to continue, as appropriate, to explore innovative approaches to more effectively address any challenges posed by the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances by involving all relevant sectors, such as broadening national and regional control over the regulation of pharmaceuticals, reinforcing health-care systems and building the capacity of law enforcement and health-care professionals to respond to this challenge while ensuring access to and the availability of these pharmaceuticals for medical and scientific purposes;

12. *Further encourages* Member States to promote the use of International Narcotics Control Board initiatives in order to assist in preventing the illicit manufacture, diversion and trafficking of non-scheduled substances and internationally controlled substances and precursors;

13. *Encourages* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, within their mandates and in consultation with Member States, to develop and share best practices to prevent non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and new psychoactive substances, in order to promote, inter alia, the rational use of these controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes;

14. *Invites* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization and other relevant United Nations entities, as well as regional and intergovernmental organizations, within their respective mandates, to streamline the national, regional and international collection of data, and encourages the sharing of best practices in data collection among those organizations with a view to enhancing global data collection, analysis and reporting on trends and responses to the harmful effects of the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or new psychoactive substances, thereby strengthening inter-agency cooperation and avoiding duplication of work;

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