

9 May 2011

Original: English

**Ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law
Enforcement Agencies, Europe**

Vienna, 28 June-1 July 2011

Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

Other business

**Review of the functioning of the subsidiary bodies of the
Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present document contains a summary and review of responses by Member States to the questionnaire on the functioning of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which was transmitted to all members of these bodies in 2009 and early 2010. This assessment was based on the sixty-seven replies received by the Secretariat from the members of the subsidiary bodies. It was undertaken in order to enhance the contributions of Member States to combating illicit drug trafficking, related crime and other forms of serious organized crime and to identify ways and means of ensuring that the meetings met the needs and expectations of participating countries.

* UNODC/HONEURO/9/1.



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I. Introduction

1. A review of the functioning of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs was undertaken by the Commission at its thirty-fourth session in 1991. At that session, the Commission adopted resolution 1 (XXXIV) in which it requested the Executive Director of UNDCP to study the nature, frequency and duration of the meetings of heads of national drug law enforcement agencies, including their financial implications, and to make proposals thereon to the Commission at session in 1992, with the view to strengthening those meetings.

2. Following the examination of this issue at its thirty-fifth session in 1992, the Commission adopted a draft resolution, which later became Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/28 entitled “Improving of the functioning of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission”, which, in addition to settling administrative matters for meetings of the subsidiary bodies, with the exception of HONLEA, Europe, requested the Commission to examine further, on a regular basis, the functioning of its subsidiary bodies.

3. UNODC undertook such an assessment in 2009 and early 2010, in preparation for the fifty-third session of the Commission, by seeking to obtain feedback from Member States with a view to enhancing their contributions to combating illicit drug trafficking, related crime and other forms of serious organized crime. Another objective was the identification of ways and means to adjust the meetings in order to ensure they meet the needs and expectations of Member States, while bearing in mind the objectives and purposes with which the meetings of the subsidiary bodies were established by the Economic and Social Council.¹

4. The questionnaire was distributed at the Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Africa, the Thirty-third Meeting of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific and the Forty-fourth session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East. Thereafter, the Secretariat transmitted the questionnaire to all States members of the subsidiary bodies by note verbale.² This document reflects the sixty-seven responses received by the Secretariat by 26 February 2010.

II. Europe

5. The Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe, took place in Vienna, from 16 to 19 June 2009. The questionnaire was transmitted to the States member of the subsidiary body³ on 12 December 2009. By the time of the preparation of this document, the Secretariat had received ten responses from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, San Marino and Spain.

¹ For mandates, see <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/commissions/CND/06-subsidiarybodies.html>.

² HONLEA, Europe — CU 2009/185 (12 December 2009); HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean — CU 2009/186 (15 December 2009); Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and related Matter in the Near and Middle East — CU 2009/187 (29 December 2009); HONLEA, Africa — CU 2009/190 (29 December 2009); HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific — CU 2009/189 (14 January 2010).

³ The membership of HONLEA Europe consists of 56 Member States.

6. Most of the responding countries noted that they considered the opportunity to meet law enforcement counterparts from other States in the region (80 per cent), as well as to develop bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation (60 per cent), as important elements of HONLEA meetings. Furthermore, 40 per cent of the States indicated that such meetings were a forum for highlighting areas of concern, while the vast majority also thought of them as forums for exchanging information and for Member States to learn from the experiences of other States (90 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively).

7. In addition, the opportunity to meet law enforcement counterparts from other States in the region and the fact that HONLEA meetings were forums for information exchange were among the practical benefits of such meetings for 80 per cent of the respondents. The meetings were forums for highlighting areas of concern, such as emerging trends, drug trafficking and its connection to organized crime in the region and seeking operational solutions for 70 per cent, as well as for developing multilateral/regional cooperation for 60 per cent of States and half of the respondents held the view that meetings fostered bilateral cooperation.

8. The feedback of 70 per cent of respondents was based on the outcome of the last HONLEA meeting that they had attended. To the question whether discussions at the meetings translated into improved cooperation at the operational level, 70 per cent responded that this was frequently the case, while 30 per cent replied that it happened rarely. One respondent noted that such meetings contributed to a better understanding and offered a platform for personal contact and direct information exchange. Networking was also cited as a key aspect in helping to facilitate bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

9. Most States from this region (90 per cent) noted that it would not be beneficial to broaden the scope of the meetings to encompass other forms of organized crime. One country responded that, instead, meetings should focus on operational cooperation. Over half of the countries (60 per cent) stated that they considered holding meetings of the subsidiary bodies in conjunction/partnership with other regional meetings of the same type as beneficial, although one State added that this would be the case only if there was a clear and precise agenda. All the countries indicated that relevant international, regional and/or subregional organizations should continue to be invited to HONLEA meetings and all respondents agreed that it would be beneficial to continue inviting law enforcement experts and specialists to the meetings in order to lead working group discussions.

10. All the responding States, with one exception, indicated that the meetings continued to adequately reflect the geographic and political scope needed for effective discussion and response to illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. The majority of States (80 per cent) considered it desirable to establish formal or informal mechanisms to provide follow-up to HONLEA meetings, with: (a) two countries favouring the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to discuss follow-up action; (b) one country in favour of establishing a group of friends of the subsidiary body to prepare the draft provisional agenda and other activities for the next meeting of the subsidiary body; (c) two countries proposing to hold meetings on the margins of the CND; (d) three countries suggesting to use the appropriate agenda item of the sessions of the CND to conduct in-depth discussions and follow-up; and (e) four countries recommending that specific time be devoted

during the CND, in particular in the Committee of the Whole, to reviewing the recommendations of the subsidiary body.⁴

11. Regarding whether the current format of the HONLEA meetings delivered the desired outcome, of the nine countries, which responded to this question, 56 per cent answered that this was indeed the case.⁵ All States, except one, thought that the format could be revised, as follows: 40 per cent proposed the organization of additional working groups, the introduction of smaller working groups to treat specific issues and of practical demonstrations of law enforcement activities to take place, while three States proposed the introduction of training workshops, as well as of lectures on specific technical law enforcement activities. In addition, two States suggested that time be devoted to drafting specific interventions and/or regional cooperation activities, as well as initiatives/resolutions to be presented to the CND.

12. Of the nine countries that responded to the question on whether the recommendations for action adopted at the meetings were important, five indicated that they were very important, two that they were moderately important and two that there were not important. Over half of the respondents (55.6 per cent) noted that the government authorities of their countries frequently took measures to implement the recommendations of the meetings, while one State responded that they did so always, rarely and never, respectively. Three States reported that they had frequently used HONLEA meetings and their outcomes as part of the political process to promote change in drug/organized crime law enforcement practices in their country, two that they did so very frequently, with two countries indicating that this was rarely the case and another that this never happened.⁶

13. Half of the responding States noted that the meetings in their present form did frequently bring added value to their national law enforcement activities, with one country indicating that this was either always or never the case, respectively, and two countries noting that this was a rare occurrence.⁷ One responding State noted that the meetings were an excellent platform for learning from the experience and innovative information presented by participants, which brought added value to national law enforcement activities. Most respondents (80 per cent) thought that the recommendations made by the subsidiary bodies were sufficiently taken into account by the CND, with one country recommending that they should feed into resolutions adopted by the Commission.

14. Most countries also rated the meetings of subsidiary bodies as useful (80 per cent), with one respondent noting that they were not. Almost 80 per cent of respondents indicated that their countries participated in the meetings, because they were important and in relation to the periodicity of the meetings, five countries

⁴ No State chose the option of "Holding formal meetings at the CND devoted to the follow-up of each subsidiary body with the participation of the relevant law enforcement experts from Member States".

⁵ One State did not respond to this question.

⁶ One State did not respond to the questions listed in this paragraph.

⁷ Two States did not respond to this question.

(56 per cent) recommended they should be held once a year,⁸ three countries — every two years, and another — every three years.⁹

III. Latin America and the Caribbean

15. The Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean, took place in Isla Margarita, Venezuela, from 28 September to 2 October 2009. The Secretariat transmitted the questionnaire to the States members of the subsidiary body¹⁰ on 15 December 2009 and received seventeen responses from Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guyana, Mexico, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

16. All the responding States indicated that HONLEA meetings provided an opportunity to meet law enforcement authorities from other States in the region. Moreover, most States (88.2 per cent) noted that such meetings allowed for the development of bilateral, multilateral/regional cooperation, as well as constituted a forum for exchanging information and for Member States to learn from the experiences of other Member States. In addition, 82.4 per cent considered that the meetings were also a forum for highlighting areas of concern. The majority of States (ranging between 76.5 per cent and 88.2 per cent) gained practical benefits from the opportunities offered by the HONLEA meetings, as outlined above. One State also suggested the establishment of a forum for the purpose of continuously updating the implementation of legislation and policies in this field.

17. The responses of all the countries, with one exception, were based on the outcome of meetings that they had attended. Furthermore, in the experience of the majority of respondents (64 per cent), discussions at the meetings did frequently translate into improved operational cooperation, while one country indicated that this was always the case and two countries noting that this was a rare occurrence. One example given by a respondent was the signing of a bilateral agreement on addressing drug trafficking, subsequent to discussions held by two countries at the Nineteenth Meeting of HONLEA. Although 58.8 per cent of the States felt that it would be beneficial to broaden the scope of the meetings to encompass other forms of organized crime, a number of respondents replied that discussions should continue to be focused on drug-related matters. The majority of member countries in the region (58.8 per cent) noted that it would be beneficial to hold meetings of the subsidiary bodies in conjunction/partnership with other regional meetings of the same type and all the responding States were in favour of continuing to invite relevant international, regional and/or subregional organizations to actively participate in the meetings of the subsidiary bodies, as well as experts and specialists, including in the field of law enforcement from the region and elsewhere.

18. All the responding States, except one,¹¹ felt that the current configuration of States meeting in the subsidiary bodies continued to adequately reflect the

⁸ The meetings of HONLEA, Europe, are held biennially, pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 2005/28.

⁹ One State did not provide a response, citing the limited capacity to participate in the meetings.

¹⁰ The membership of HONLEA Latin America and the Caribbean consists of 44 Member States.

¹¹ One State did not respond to this question.

geographical and political scope needed for effective discussion and response to illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. Most States (88.2 per cent) also thought that it would be desirable to establish ongoing formal or informal mechanisms to provide follow-up to HONLEA meetings, including: (a) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to discuss follow-up action (23.5 per cent); (b) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to prepare the draft provisional agenda and activities for the next meeting (35.3 per cent); (c) holding meetings at the margins of the sessions of the CND in order to promote regional/interregional cooperation (47.1 per cent); (d) holding formal meetings at the CND on the follow-up of each subsidiary body (41.2 per cent); (e) using the appropriate item of the CND agenda to discuss the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies (47.1 per cent); and (f) devoting specific time during the CND to reviewing the recommendations of the meetings and discussing follow-up (76.1 per cent).

19. One country suggested that a permanent working group be established to meet formally prior and during the CND, which would, among other things, develop annual workplans, organize the meetings, prepare the draft provisional agenda and its annotations, set up the working groups and carry out capacity-building activities, in addition to developing follow-up measures, including, *inter alia*, the drafting of resolutions and decisions to be presented to the CND.

20. Of the fifteen countries that answered the question on whether the format of HONLEA meetings delivered the desired outcome, nine responded affirmatively, while, at the same time, all the States, except one, noted the need to revise the format, as follows: (a) additional working groups (29.4 per cent); (b) introduction of training workshops (52.9 per cent); (c) smaller working groups to treat specific issues (64.7 per cent); (d) lectures on specific technical law enforcement activities (58.8 per cent); (e) practical demonstrations of law enforcement operational activities (58.8 per cent); (f) devoting time to drafting specific interventions and/or regional cooperation activities (41.2 per cent) and (g) devoting time to drafting initiatives/resolutions to be presented to the CND (58.8 per cent).

21. Of the fourteen States¹² which answered the question on whether the recommendations of the meetings were important to the governments in the region, eight respondents qualified them as very important and five as moderately important, with one country noting that they were not very important. Fourteen of the seventeen States responded to the question on whether their governments took active measures to implement the recommendations of the meetings, by indicating that they did so always (31 per cent), frequently (50 per cent) and rarely (14 per cent). Nine of the States that answered this question¹³ frequently used the meetings and their outcomes as part of the political process to promote change, with three States doing so always and two — rarely.¹⁴ The meetings frequently brought added value to law enforcement activities of almost 50 per cent of the States that responded to this question,¹⁵ while to 33 per cent stated that they did so always and to 20 per cent that they did so rarely.

¹² Three States did not respond to this question.

¹³ Three States did not respond to this question.

¹⁴ Two States did not respond to this question.

¹⁵ Two States did not respond to this question.

22. Most of the responding States (88 per cent) thought that the recommendations made by the subsidiary bodies were sufficiently taken into account by the CND.¹⁶ The majority of countries (63 per cent) in this region rated the meetings of subsidiary bodies as useful, with 31 per cent indicating they were very useful. All the respondents¹⁷ indicated their countries participated in the meetings because they were important and most (88.2 per cent) expressed the view that they should be held once a year,¹⁸ with one State expressing a preference for the biennial meetings, and another for the triennial ones.

IV. Asia and the Pacific

23. The Thirty-third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific took place in Denpasar, Indonesia, from 6 to 9 October 2009. The questionnaire was distributed at that meeting, as well as transmitted to the States members of the subsidiary body¹⁹ on 14 January 2010. Nine responses from Armenia, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, and Singapore were received by the Secretariat.

24. All the responding countries indicated that they considered the opportunity to meet law enforcement counterparts from other States in the region and to develop multilateral/regional cooperation to be important elements of the meetings, in addition to viewing them as forums for highlighting areas of concern, exchanging information and learning from the experiences of other Member States. In addition, all the States, except one, considered the meetings a forum for developing bilateral cooperation. Moreover, all the States obtained practical benefits from the fact that the meetings constituted forums for highlighting areas of concern, exchanging of information and learning from the experiences of other Member States. For most States the meetings were also forums for developing bilateral, as well as multilateral and regional cooperation (75 per cent and 88 per cent, respectively), in addition to providing the opportunity to meet law enforcement counterparts from other States in the region. One representative commented that these meetings provided an opportunity to develop a personal rapport with heads of agencies of other countries, which was essential to improving cooperation, as well as to discussing specific cases.

25. The responses of all States, except two, were based on the outcome of the last HONLEA meetings attended, with one country specifying that its response had been based on the assessment of delegations that had attended prior meetings. The majority of respondents (66.7 per cent) felt that discussions at meetings frequently translated into improved operational cooperation, while, in the view of one country, HONLEA meetings had been perceived as policymaking forums. The responses were almost evenly split as to whether it would be beneficial to broaden the scope

¹⁶ One State did not respond to this question and one State gave both a positive and a negative answer.

¹⁷ One State did not respond to this and the previous questions.

¹⁸ The meetings of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, are held once a year, pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1988/15.

¹⁹ The membership of HONLEA Asia and the Pacific consists of 53 Member States.

of the meetings to encompass other forms of organized crime (55.6 per cent — yes; 44.4 per cent — no). Although most States (66.7 per cent) did not think that it would be beneficial to hold meetings of the subsidiary bodies in conjunction/partnership with other regional meetings of the same type, all the respondents agreed that relevant international, regional and/or subregional organizations, as well as law enforcement experts and specialists should continue to be invited to participate in the meetings of the subsidiary bodies.

26. In the view of nearly 90 per cent of the States, the current configuration of the meetings continued to adequately reflect the geographic and political scope needed for effective discussion and response to illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, and it would be desirable to establish ongoing formal or informal mechanisms to provide follow-up to the meetings of HONLEA, including: (a) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to discuss follow-up action (33.3 per cent); (b) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to prepare the draft provisional agenda and activities for the next meeting (55.6 per cent); (c) holding meetings at the margins of the sessions of the CND in order to promote regional/interregional cooperation (44.4 per cent); (d) holding formal meetings at the CND on the follow-up of each subsidiary body (22.2 per cent); (e) using the appropriate item of the CND agenda to discuss the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies (33.3 per cent); and (f) devoting specific time during the CND to reviewing the recommendations of the meetings and discussing follow-up (33.3 per cent).

27. Although for the majority of States (66.7 per cent), the format of the meetings delivered the desired outcome, all respondents thought that it could be revised, as follows: (a) additional working groups (55.5 per cent); (b) introduction of training workshops (33.3 per cent); (c) smaller working groups to treat specific issues (77.8 per cent); (d) lectures on specific technical law enforcement activities (44.4 per cent); (e) practical demonstrations of law enforcement operational activities (33.3 per cent); (f) devoting time to drafting specific interventions and/or regional cooperation activities (11.1 per cent); and (g) devoting time to drafting initiatives/resolutions to be presented to the CND (33.3 per cent).

28. For a majority (55.6 per cent), the recommendations of the meetings were very important, for three of the respondents they were moderately important, and for one country they were not important. The responses to the question on whether Governments had taken active measures to implement the recommendations of the meetings were evenly split at 50 per cent between “always” and “frequently”. One State noted that it had acquired experience and new methods to address drug-related crime. Most States (75 per cent) also frequently used the meetings and their outcomes to promote change in drug/organized crime law enforcement practices in their countries and in the view of half of the respondents, the meetings frequently brought added value to their national law enforcement activities, while for two States, this was the case either always or rarely, respectively.

29. For four of the seven responding States²⁰ the recommendations made by the subsidiary bodies were sufficiently taken into account by the CND. Furthermore, 38 per cent of the countries rated the meetings as very useful and 63 per cent as

²⁰ Two States did not respond to this question.

useful. All the countries participated in the meetings because they were important and stated that they should be held once a year.²¹ The questionnaire for this region contained an additional question on whether the meeting would benefit from interpretation and translation into other United Nations languages of the region (i.e. Chinese, English, French and Russian). Out of the six of the States that answered this question, five did so in the affirmative.

V. Africa

30. The questionnaire was distributed at the Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, which took place in Windhoek, Namibia, from 12 to 16 October 2009. It was also transmitted to the States members of the subsidiary body²² on 29 December 2009. The Secretariat received responses from twenty-two countries, namely Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Swaziland, and the United States of America (observer).

31. The majority (68.2 per cent) of countries indicated that the opportunity to meet law enforcement authorities from other States in the region and to develop bilateral cooperation were important elements of the HONLEA meetings. At the same time, 72.7 per cent thought that the meetings also provided the opportunity to develop multilateral and regional cooperation, as well as served as a forum for the exchange of information. A slight majority of the respondents (54.5 per cent) noted that the meetings were forums for highlighting areas of concern and for 81.8 per cent the meetings were also a forum to learn from the experiences of other Member States. One State noted that HONLEA meetings provided an opportunity to prepare the ground for bilateral and multilateral agreements.

32. For the majority of States (63.6 per cent), the opportunity to meet law enforcement authorities from other States was among the practical benefits of the meetings, along with the fact they also were a forum for highlighting areas of concern and for the exchange of information (68.2 per cent). For 72.7 per cent of respondents, the meetings were also a forum to learn from the experiences of other Member States. Less than half of the States thought that the meetings fostered bilateral and multilateral/regional cooperation (45.5 per cent and 40.9 per cent, respectively).

33. The responses of the majority of countries (63.6 per cent) were based on the outcome of prior HONLEA meetings. The discussions always translated into improved operational cooperation in the view of 31.8 per cent of the States, frequently — for 45.5 per cent respondents and rarely — for 18.2 per cent. Some respondents commented that discussions at HONLEA meetings facilitated direct contact among Member States and sometimes had directly resulted in arrests of suspected drug traffickers. The majority of the States (72.7 per cent) expressed the

²¹ The meetings of HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, are held once a year, pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1988/15.

²² The membership of HONLEA Africa consists of 53 Member States.

view that it would be beneficial to broaden the scope of the meetings to encompass other forms of organized crime, with several respondents listing, *inter alia*, trafficking in firearms and money-laundering. On the question of whether it would be beneficial to hold meetings of the subsidiary bodies in conjunction/partnership with other regional meetings of the same type, the responses were evenly split at 50 per cent. All the States were in favour of continuing to invite relevant international, regional and/or subregional organizations to actively participate in the meetings, while most (90.9 per cent) also thought that it would be beneficial to continue inviting experts and specialists including in the field of law enforcement in the region.

34. In the view of 86 per cent of the responding States,²³ the current configuration of Member States meeting in the subsidiary bodies continued to adequately reflect the geographical and political scope needed for effective discussion and response to illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. The same percentage of respondents noted that it would be desirable to establish ongoing formal or informal mechanisms to provide follow-up to HONLEA meetings, including: (a) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to discuss follow-up action (43 per cent); (b) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to prepare the draft provisional agenda and activities for the next meeting (48 per cent); (c) holding meetings at the margins of the sessions of the CND in order to promote regional/interregional cooperation (57 per cent); (d) holding formal meetings at the CND devoted to the follow-up of each subsidiary body (43 per cent); (e) using the appropriate item of the CND agenda to discuss the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies (33 per cent); and (f) devoting specific time during the CND to reviewing the recommendations of the meetings and discussing follow-up (29 per cent).²⁴

35. For the majority of States (81 per cent), the current format of HONLEA meetings delivered the desired outcome, although, at the same time, 71 per cent of respondents thought that the format could be revised as follows:²⁵ (a) introduction of training workshops (48 per cent); (b) smaller working groups to treat specific issues and develop practical law enforcement interventions (52 per cent); (c) lectures on specific technical law enforcement activities (43 per cent); (d) practical demonstrations of law enforcement operational activities (19 per cent); (e) devoting time to drafting specific interventions and/or regional cooperation activities (14 per cent); and (f) devoting time to drafting initiatives/resolutions to be presented to the CND (14 per cent).²⁶

36. For most States (86 per cent), the meetings were very important, while the responses to the question on whether national authorities took active measures to implement the recommendations of the meetings, 43 per cent replied that they “always” did so and a further 43 per cent that they did so “frequently”. The Governments of more than half of the responding countries always used the meetings and their outcomes as part of the political process to promote change in

²³ One State did not respond to this question.

²⁴ One State did not respond to any of the questions listed in this paragraph.

²⁵ One State did not respond to any of the questions listed in this paragraph.

²⁶ None of the responding countries opted for “Additional working groups”, listed in the questionnaire.

drug/organized law enforcement practices, with 36.4 per cent noting that this was frequently the case.²⁷

37. The meetings always brought added value to 50 per cent of the States and frequently so to 45.5 per cent. In the view of most States (81 per cent), the recommendations made by the subsidiary bodies were sufficiently taken into account by the Commission and the meetings were very useful for 54.4 per cent and useful for 45.5 per cent.²⁸ All the responding countries participated in the HONLEA meetings because they were important.²⁹ In addition, 91 per cent of the responding countries³⁰ expressed the view that they should be held once a year, while two countries thought that the meetings should be held every two years.³¹ Some States noted that meetings should be yearly due to crime evolving rapidly and the consequent need to respond in a timely manner to shifting global trends.

VI. Near and Middle East

38. The Forty-fourth Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East took place in Vienna, Austria, on 16 to 19 November 2009. The questionnaire was distributed at the meeting, as well as transmitted to the States members of the subsidiary body³² on 29 December 2009. The Secretariat received nine replies from Egypt, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey and United Arab Emirates.

39. Nearly all the responding States from this region (88.9 per cent) agreed that the opportunity to meet law enforcement counterparts from other States in the region, as well as to develop bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation were important elements of the meetings of the Subcommission. Moreover, 77.8 per cent agreed that the meetings were important forums for highlighting areas of concern, such as emerging trends, drug trafficking and its connection with organized crime in the region, exchanging information and for learning from the experience of other Member States.

40. All the countries, except one, agreed that the opportunity to meet law enforcement counterparts from other States in the region was one of the practical benefits of the meetings, while the majority (63 per cent) also thought that they provided ways to develop bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation.

41. The responses of six out of the nine responding States³³ were not solely based on the outcome of the last meeting they had attended and one State commented that the feedback was based on mutual interest in improving cooperation and addressing issues of common interest. In the experience of the majority of responding States

²⁷ One State did not respond to the questions listed in this paragraph.

²⁸ One State did not respond to this question.

²⁹ One State did not respond to this question.

³⁰ The meetings of HONLEA, Africa, are held once a year, pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1988/15.

³¹ One State did not respond to this question.

³² The membership of Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East consists of 23 Member States.

³³ One State did not respond to this question.

(63 per cent),³⁴ the discussions frequently translated into improved operational cooperation, while, in the view of one State it was always the case and two States indicated that this was a rare occurrence. In this context, two respondents noted that the meetings facilitated the development of personal contacts, the exchange of information and experience and the consolidation of efforts in tackling drug trafficking. Also, the majority of respondents (63 per cent) felt that it would not be beneficial to broaden the scope of the meetings to other forms of organized crime, or to hold meetings of the subsidiary bodies in conjunction/partnership with other agencies or regional events.³⁵

42. At the same time, all the respondents³⁶ thought that relevant international, regional and/or subregional organizations and all States, except one, felt that experts and specialists including in the field of law enforcement in the region, should continue to be invited to actively participate in the meetings of the subsidiary bodies. For most States (77.8 per cent), the current configuration of the meetings continued to adequately reflect the geographical and political scope needed for effective discussion and response to illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. Also, the same percentage of States expressed the view that it would be desirable to establish ongoing formal or informal mechanisms to provide follow-up to meetings of the subsidiary bodies, including: (a) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to discuss follow-up action (11.1 per cent); (b) the establishment of a group of friends of the subsidiary body to prepare the draft provisional agenda and activities for the next meeting (33.3 per cent); (c) holding meetings at the margins of the sessions of the CND in order to promote regional/interregional cooperation (22.2 per cent); (d) holding formal meetings at the CND on the follow-up of each subsidiary body (11.1 per cent); (e) using the appropriate item of the CND agenda to discuss the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies (22.2 per cent); and (f) devoting specific time during the CND to reviewing the recommendations of the meetings and discussing follow-up (22.2 per cent). The one State, which did not respond to this question, commented that the existing arrangements were adequate.

43. For the majority of States (66.7 per cent), the current format of the meetings delivered the desired outcome, albeit with some revisions, such as: (a) additional working groups (11.1 per cent); (b) introduction of training workshops (33.3 per cent); (c) smaller working groups to treat specific issues and develop practical law enforcement interventions (55.6 per cent); (d) lectures on specific technical law enforcement activities (33.3 per cent); (e) practical demonstrations of law enforcement operational activities (55.6 per cent); (f) devoting time to drafting specific interventions and/or regional cooperation activities (22.2 per cent); and (g) devoting time to drafting initiatives/resolutions to be presented to the CND (44.4 per cent).

44. Most States (77.8 per cent) noted that the recommendations for action adopted by the meetings were very important for their Governments, 66.7 per cent of which also took active measures to implement them. The majority of countries (63 per cent)³⁷ frequently used the meetings and their outcomes to promote change in their

³⁴ One State did not respond to this question.

³⁵ One State did not respond to either of these two questions.

³⁶ One State did not respond to this question.

³⁷ One State did not respond to these two questions.

national drug/organized crime law enforcement practices and expressed the view that the meetings brought added value to their national activities. Moreover, all the countries that responded to this question³⁸ thought that the recommendations made by the subsidiary bodies were sufficiently taken into account by the CND.

45. The majority of respondents (63 per cent)³⁹ rated the meetings as useful and 38 per cent as very useful. All the countries participated in the meetings because they were important and thought that they should be held once a year.⁴⁰

VII. Conclusions

46. Below are some of the salient conclusions arising from the responses to the questionnaire:

(a) The vast majority of the responding States across the five regions considered that the opportunity to meet law enforcement authorities of other States, to develop bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation, as well as the fact that HONLEA meetings constituted forums for highlighting areas of concern, for the exchange of information and for learning from the experiences from other Member States, were important elements of HONLEA meetings.⁴¹ In the experience of most respondents in most regions, these elements were also among the practical benefits of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies, except for HONLEA Africa where 45.5 per cent of respondents felt that the meetings fostered multilateral/regional cooperation, and 40.9 per cent considered them forums for highlighting areas of concern. Also, less than half of respondents in Europe felt that the meetings allowed for the development of bilateral cooperation;

(b) In the experience of the majority of respondents, the meetings translated into improved cooperation at the operational level;

(c) The majority of respondents in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa were in favour and most respondents in Europe and Near and Middle East were against broadening the scope of the meetings to encompass other forms of organized crime;

(d) To the question of whether it would be beneficial to hold meetings of the subsidiary bodies in conjunction/partnership with other regional meetings of the same type, the responses were evenly split, as follows: Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean — in favour; Asia and the Pacific and the Subcommission for Near and Middle East — against, while in Africa the responses were split at 50 per cent. The majority of States expressed the view that it would be beneficial to continue inviting relevant international regional and/or subregional organizations, as well as experts and specialists including from law enforcement from the region and elsewhere to the meetings;

³⁸ Two countries did not respond to this question.

³⁹ Two States did not respond to this question.

⁴⁰ The meetings of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in Near and Middle East are held once a year, pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1988/14.

⁴¹ The one exception is Europe, where 40 per cent of respondents considered HONLEA meetings forums for highlighting areas of concern.

(e) Most countries also felt that the current configuration of Member States meeting in the subsidiary bodies continued to adequately reflect the geographical and political scope needed for effective discussion and response to illicit drug trafficking and organized crime;

(f) In the view of the majority of countries, the current format of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies delivered the desired outcome, although most also noted that it could be revised, with proposals ranging from the establishment of additional working groups, introduction of training workshops, lectures and practical demonstrations on specific law enforcement activities and others. For the majority of States, the recommendations for action adopted by the meetings were very important, while for many respondents, there were moderately important;

(g) Approximately half of governments in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean frequently took active measures to implement the recommendations of the meetings, while the majority of governments in the countries of the Near and Middle East did so always and the responses in Africa and Asia and the Pacific were almost evenly split between “always” and “frequently”. Most States noted that they had frequently used the meetings and their outcomes as part of the political process to promote change in national drug/organized crime law enforcement practices, with the exception of Africa where it was always the case for 50 per cent of respondents;

(h) For a slight majority of respondents, the meetings brought added value to the law enforcement activities in their countries. Moreover, for the majority of States, the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission were useful and most respondents declared that their Governments participated because they considered the meetings of importance;

(i) Although in the view of most States, the recommendations made by the subsidiary bodies were sufficiently taken into account by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, there was also agreement that the Commission should pay more attention to the recommendations adopted by the subsidiary bodies;

(j) In addition, most States thought that it would be desirable to establish ongoing formal or informal mechanisms to provide follow-up to the meetings of subsidiary bodies and support the preparations of forthcoming meetings, such as through the establishment of groups of friends that would meet formally or informally to discuss, inter alia, the agenda for the next meetings of the subsidiary bodies and mechanisms to review the recommendations of the subsidiary bodies at the margins of or during the sessions of the Commission;

(k) Regarding the periodicity of meetings, the vast majority of States (between 56 per cent and 100 per cent)⁴² responded that meetings should be held once a year;

(l) On the issue of languages, the questionnaire for Asia and the Pacific contained an additional question on whether the meeting would benefit from interpretation and translation into other United Nations languages of the region (i.e. Chinese, English, French and Russian). Most of the responding countries agreed that the meeting would indeed benefit from such services.

⁴² The lowest percentage (56 per cent) was registered for HONLEA, Europe, which is held biennially.

VIII. Recommendations

47. It is recommended that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs consider taking the following action:

(a) Actively consider the recommendations adopted by the subsidiary bodies during the sessions of the Commission, under the appropriate agenda item and taking appropriate follow-up action;

(b) Recommend the establishment of informal groups of friends of the Chairpersons of the meetings, that may meet formally or informally to support the work of each subsidiary body by discussing preparations, including of the provisional agenda and other activities pertaining to the meetings, as well as to examine possible follow-up action, including the drafting of resolutions/decisions for the consideration of the CND;

(c) Recommend improvements to the current format of the meetings, which may include additional working groups, the introduction of training workshops and of smaller working groups to consider specific issues and develop practical law enforcement interventions, as well as of lectures on and practical demonstrations of specific law enforcement activities.

48. Consider transmitting for adopting by the Economic and Social Council a resolution or decision to provide interpretation and translation services into the official United Nations languages of the region to the Meetings of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific.
