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**Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic  
and Related Matters in the Near and  
Middle East****Fifty-fourth session**

Tashkent, 23–27 September 2019

**Draft report***Rapporteur:* Tlegen Matkenov (Kazakhstan)**Addendum****Consideration of topics by working groups****Issue (c): Record levels of opiate production and related challenges**

1. The working group on the above topic met during the fifth meeting, held on 25 September 2019. In its consideration of the topic in question, the working group formulated the following observations:

(a) Despite a certain drop in opiate cultivation in 2018 the level of opium production remains at high level in Afghanistan;

(b) There are serious challenges in relation to countering precursors trafficking to Afghanistan, identifying source countries, trafficking routes and ways of diversion of chemicals, specifically acetic anhydride, from legal trade to illicit trafficking;

(c) Significant amounts of morphine are being trafficked from Afghanistan and seized in a number of countries, indicating that there might be heroin producing labs outside of Afghanistan;

(d) Corruption and money-laundering are directly linked to illicit trafficking in drugs and precursors and should be subjected to a proper in-depth investigation;

(e) High demand in destination countries is fueling production and trafficking of heroin from Afghanistan, and therefore serious measures should be undertaken in the demand reduction area;

(f) The establishment of multi-agency Border Liaison Offices (BLO) on the borders between the countries provides solid foundation for simplifying, accelerating and easing exchange of information and direct interaction between the agencies concerned;

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



(g) Trafficking of acetic anhydride by maritime routes, including through the Indian ocean in containers or in small vessels such as “dhows” is considered as one of the major trafficking routes. Significant seizures of Acetic Anhydride (AA) and other precursors recorded by the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan indicate that seaports as well as coastline in general are used for trafficking of these chemicals.

2. The working group drew up the following conclusions:

(a) There is a need for developing an effective targeting mechanism to tackle illicit trafficking in heroin and precursors, including mechanisms for targeting major drug trafficking organizations;

(b) Use of special investigative techniques, including controlled deliveries, are prerequisites for effective actions aimed at identification, investigation and dismantling drugs and precursors trafficking criminal organizations;

(c) Large scale measures in introducing sustainable alternatives to opium production are being considered as one of the important elements in reducing opium poppy cultivation;

(d) Measures are needed to target, identify and dismantle clandestine laboratories producing heroin;

(e) The rapid development and implementation of the infrastructural projects including expanding of railways into Afghanistan require measures to allow targeting illicit shipments while facilitating legal trade;

(f) The international community needs to do more to support Afghanistan in pursuing balanced responses to drug supply and demand;

(g) UNODC should continue its programmes and projects supporting Afghanistan and neighbouring countries in their efforts to counter illicit trafficking in drugs and their precursors through providing technical support, equipment and training as well as supporting initiatives aimed at facilitating exchange of criminal intelligence and coordination of multilateral operations;

(h) UNODC initiatives to support placement of liaison officers in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries and beyond are considered as very important and support of the donors is being sought to continue/expand this network.

3. The working group adopted the following recommendations:

(a) Governments are encouraged to introduce and/or further develop profiling techniques to ensure targeting illicit trafficking of drugs and precursors while facilitating legal trade. UNODC's Container Control Program is instrumental in providing these techniques in relation to container shipments;

(b) Governments should undertake appropriate measures at national level and cooperate at international level to identify and investigate diversion of precursor chemicals (specifically acetic anhydride) and their further trafficking;

(c) Governments are encouraged to further support efforts of Afghanistan in reducing opium poppy cultivation, countering illicit trafficking in opiates and dismantling clandestine laboratories.

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