



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE 42ND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS 16-25 MARCH 1999 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR YOGESH M. TIWARI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA

While we are considering the Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, I would like to draw your attention as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China to the global programme on assessing the magnitude of drug abuse prepared by the Policy Development and Analysis Branch of UNDCP.

This morning, we had the pleasure of discussing this programme with the Executive Director, Mr. Pino Arlacchi. Mr. Arlacchi elaborated his ideas on the need to have more reliable and accurate data on drug abuse which could provide a reliable basis for the development of national demand reduction policies and strategies. Such epidemiological research would also provide an indicator to measure further achievements of national programmes as agreed in the Political Declaration of UNGASS. The Executive Director also shared his concern about the need to balance demand reduction programmes and alternative development strategies.

Mr. Chairman, all of us are aware that we need to study the extent of poverty to address the question of removing it effectively though poverty is not a disease that is contagious nor addictive. The strategies evolved for eradication of epidemic diseases like malaria was based on studies on the extent of the spread of the disease. The time has come now to treat drug addiction as an epidemic which needs to be addressed with equal seriousness. Drug abuse is not a problem that merely affects developed countries; it is on the rise in many developing countries especially among the children and youth. In many cases, developing countries do not have sufficient information about the drug abuse situation nor do they have capacity to systematically collect and analyze data regarding the drug abuse situation. As a result, insufficient resources are allotted to combat drug menace. In the process, the measures prove ineffective and the already meager resources are wasted without achieving commensurable results. In 1997, 48 countries, majority of them developing and least developed countries, have asked for assistance from UNDCP to build up their data collection capacity. Since 1997, many Latin American countries have, under the framework of Memorandum of Understanding, been helped by UNDCP to establish sub-regional drug abuse information systems and similar assistance is being considered for countries in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia. However, these technical assistance programmes are just the beginning. Similar assistance for capacity building will have to be provided to a large number of developing countries lacking basic infrastructure to study and monitor the drug abuse.

We have been informed that UNDCP has sought US\$25 million (from Major Donors) to give technical assistance and initiate epidemiological studies in various countries. Out of these, only 40% is slated to be spent on the Headquarters while 85% will be spent on country level activity and 5% on World Epidemiological Forum. We see this programme as a timely and necessary measure. I take this opportunity to appeal to all Member States and Major Donors in particular, to give due importance to this programme which could become the basis for the future strategies on drug demand reduction. The UN General Assembly Special Session had agreed to have new demand reduction strategies and programmes in place by the year 2003 and achieve significant and measurable results in the field of drug demand reduction by the year 2008.

Thus, there is little time to lose. We would like to draw upon the experience of developed countries in dealing with the drug abuse programme as many of them seem to have contained the drug abuse. We may have to find our own national responses but the assistance of industrialized and developed countries will go

a long way to tackle the global menace of drug abuse. In UNDCP, we have the right instrument to help developing countries create systems at regional, sub-regional and national levels for systematic collection and assimilation of data. This data will give us the much-needed knowledge for development of effective measures for prevention of drug abuse and treatment and rehabilitation of the addicts.

Mr Chairman, as Chairman of G-77 and China, I request you to appreciate our views on this subject and include them in suitable form in the Summary of Proceedings.